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BIOGRAPHIES AND PORTRAITS

OF SOME

CELEBRATED PEOPLE.

BY

ALFONSE DE LAMARTINE.

VOL. II.

SHAKSPEARE.
CHARLOTTE CORDAY.
MADAME ROLAND.
MIRABEAU.
DANTON.
VERGNIAUD.

26277
at

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SHAKSPEARE.

MACBETH.

Shakspeare is, before everything, an honest man. It is impossible to deny this when, as is the case with me at the present moment, one has been obliged to read or re-read all that he has written. Taste may sometimes be scandalized by this lecture, morality is always edified. One feels in it a conviction of virtue, a habit of mental rectitude, a spirit of honesty and honour, which bear ultimate witness to the character of a good man, one may even say of a good Christian. It is a remarkable circumstance that tragic paganism in modern dramas disappears in Shakspeare, and that if his dramas be criminal in their results, their logic is always and inevitably evangelical. *Macbeth*, that great drama of an ambitious man led on to crime through his love for his wife, Lady Macbeth, is pitiless but not unscrupulous. Its horror is due to the remorse for crime to be committed, and for crime committed. One pities the murderer almost as much as the victim. His true names are Crime, Remorse, and Expiation. Lady Macbeth alone seems without compunction, but she loses her reason, and dies before the expiatory catastrophe which befalls her husband. Her intrepid guilt, which could urge to crime and uphold

it, could not support its punishment. In Shakspeare, every great crime is inspired by a wicked woman. The man executes but does not originate it. The being of sentiment is more immoral than the being of will. The woman's mind approaches guilt more readily than the man's hand approaches his victim. One feels that in committing the murder he obeys a power of perversity greater than himself. This power of perversity is the woman's ardent imagination. Witness Lady Macbeth.

At the commencement, her husband is a brave man and a loyal adherent of Duncan, King of Scotland. Duncan loves him, and worthily rewards his services. He does more, he honours him; he trusts him so far as to visit him in his castle, accompanied only by a small number of courtiers and pages.

Here commences the terrible and unexpected drama that the history of Scotland took 16 years to develope, but which the impatient genius of Shakspeare concentrates in a single night, under the pressure of that woman thirsting for power who is called Lady Macbeth.

But, in the first place, it is necessary that the hitherto loyal mind of the Scotch thane Macbeth should have been predisposed by witches, the creation of the local superstitions of Scotland, to vague thoughts of unlimited ambition, which make the crown itself appear to him a fitting reward for his heroism.

Here the play begins—Macbeth, as yet innocent, s travelling at night, with his friend and ally Banquo, hrough the Scotch heather. Their horses, startled, ear and stop short before the apparition of three vitches, rivals of the *Parcæ*, the fatal sisters of antique aganism, which is never quite dead in the traditions of new converts.

"Paddock calls," says one of the witches, named Naule,

> "Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
> Hover through the fog and filthy air."

The spectator is made aware that something supernatural is to take place in the play.

In the following scene, the good king is informed hat the thane of Cawdor, who had betrayed him and nvited the Norwegians to attack his territory, has allen beneath the sword of Macbeth. The king estows upon Macbeth the castle, the title, and the lomains of Cawdor.

The king withdraws. The witches, evoked by a eal of thunder, again appear on the heath. They ing, whilst forming a magic circle, the disconnected words of their language. Macbeth and his friend Banquo pass by the spot at night, on their return from battle.

"MACB. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BAN. How far is't call'd to Fores?—What are these?
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,

By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACB. Speak, if you can:—What are you?

1 WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

2 WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

3 WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! that shall be king hereafter.

BAN. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?—I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having, and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say, which grain will grow, and which will not;
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

1 WITCH. Hail!

2 WITCH. Hail!

3 WITCH. Hail!

1 WITCH. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 WITCH. Not so happy, yet much happier.

3 WITCH. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

1 WITCH. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACB. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more!
By Sinel's death, I know, I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and, to be king,
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say, from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting?—Speak, I charge you.
(*Witches vanish.*)

BAN. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them:—Whither are they vanish'd?

MACB. Into the air; and what seemed corporal, melted
As breath into the wind.—'Would they had staid!

BAN. Were such things here, as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten of the insane root,
That takes the reason prisoner.

MACB. Your children shall be kings.

BAN. You shall be king.

MACB. And thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?

BAN. To the self-same tune and words. Who's here?"

Some of Duncan's courtiers here meet the two warriors, and inform Macbeth that the king has bestowed upon him the title of thane of Cawdor.

Banquo exclaims:—

"New honours come upon him
Like our strange garments,—cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of time."

Macbeth, innocent and astonished, replies:—

"If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me
Without my stir. Come what come may,
Time and the hour run through the roughest day."

The following scene is at Macbeth's castle. The king enters it, and overwhelms the brave soldier with his gratitude.

"Stars, hide your fires!" says to himself Macbeth,
"Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand! yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see!"

The king retires to rest in a room within the interior of the castle.

Lady Macbeth, with a paper in her hand, enters a room within this same castle of Inverness. She reads in a low tone a letter from her husband informing her of the witches' prediction, and especially of the equivocal expression: *King that shalt be!*

Lady Macbeth soliloquizes as follows:—

"Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised:—Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way: Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win; thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, *Thus thou must do, if thou have it;*
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear:
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

* * * * *

The raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes:
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, *Hold, hold!*—Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!

Enter MACBETH.

Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACB. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

LADY M. And when goes hence?
MACB. To-morrow,—as he purposes.
LADY M. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters.—To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my despatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
MACB. We will speak further.
LADY M. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The same. Before the Castle.*

Hautboys. Servants of Macbeth attending.

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENOX, MACDUFF, ROSSE, ANGUS, *and Attendants.*

DUN. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
BAN. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here; no jutty, frieze, buttress,
No coigne of vantage, but this bird hath made

His pendent bed, and procreant cradle: Where they
Most breed and haunt, I have observed, the air
Is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

DUN. See, see! our honour'd hostess!
The love that follows us, sometimes is our trouble
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you,
How you shall bid God yield us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

LADY M. All our service,
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad, wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: For those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

DUN. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holped him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

LADY M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

DUN. Give me your hand:
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*The same. A Room in the Castle.*

Hautboys and torches. Enter and pass over the stage, a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service. Then enter MACBETH.

MACB. If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well,
It were done quickly: If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here.
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,—
We'd jump the life to come.—But, in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other side.—How now, what news.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

LADY M. He has almost supp'd: Why have you left the chamber?

MACB. Hath he asked for me?

LADY M. Know you not, he has?

MACB. We will proceed no further in this business;
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY M. Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would,*
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACB. Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.

LADY M. What beast was't then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;

And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck; and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn, as you
Have done to this.

MACB. If we should fail,——

LADY M. We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassel so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only. When in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

MACB. Bring forth men-children only!

For thy undaunted metal should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY M. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

MACB. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The same. Court within the Castle.*

Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE, *and a Servant with a torch before them.*

BAN. How goes the night, boy?

FLE. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

BAN. And she goes down at twelve.

FLE. I take't 'tis later, sir.

BAN. Hold, take my sword.—There's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out.—Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers!
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!—Give me my sword;—

Enter MACBETH, *and a Servant with a torch.*

Who's there?

MACB. A friend.

BAN. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and

Sent forth great largess to your offices:
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content."

The nocturnal scene of the murder is harrowing and terrible. In the soul of Macbeth, who sees living daggers pointing out to him the way towards the apartment of the sleeping Duncan, remorse precedes crime. In Lady Macbeth the passion to reign stifles everything except ambition. By her gestures, she urges him to enter the chamber. He leaves it with his hands covered with blood. By the advice of his wife, he slays, in the adjoining room, all the courtiers and pages, intoxicated with wine, in order to accuse them of his crime, and to pretend that, finding his royal guest murdered, he killed them in his indignation.

A knocking is heard outside. Macbeth looks at his hands.

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green—one red!"

It is Lenox and Macduff, two friends of the king, who have come in accordance with his orders on the preceding day.

"LEN. The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confused events,

New hatch'd to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night: some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake.

MACB. 'Twas a rough night.

LEN. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

MACD. O horror! horror! horror! Tongue, nor heart,
Cannot conceive, nor name thee!

MACB. & LEN. What's the matter?

MACD. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building.

MACB. What is't you say? the life?

LEN. Mean you his majesty?

MACD. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon.—Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.—Awake! awake!—
[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lenox.*
Ring the alarum-bell.—Murder! and treason!
Banquo, and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself!—up, up, and see
The great doom's image!—Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprights,
To countenance this horror! (*Bell rings.*)

Enter LADY MACBETH.

LADY M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak——
MACD. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.——O Banquo! Banquo!

Enter BANQUO.

Our royal master's murdered!
LADY M. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
BAN. Too cruel anywhere.——
Dear Duff, I pr'ythee, contradict thyself,
And say, it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENOX.

MACB. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown, and grace, is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of."

"To horse! to horse!" exclaim the two sons and the friends of Duncan. "Let us reflect before we act, the one in England, the other in Ireland, let us know what designs this treachery forebodes!"

"ROSSE. And Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and certain),
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,

Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind." . . .

Macbeth is proclaimed king.

To this first crime succeeds a second one; the murder of Banquo, invited by Macbeth to his table, and assassinated by his orders as he leaves the palace at night. But the son of Banquo escapes, and the crime is therefore of no avail, for the witches have predicted that the offspring of Banquo shall be kings.

"MACB. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let
The frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams,
That shake us nightly: Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further!

LADY M. What's to be done?

MACB. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed.

* * * *

Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill!"

In the midst of a festival which he gives to the nobles of his court, remorse seizes him in the form of an access of madness, during which he accuses himself of his murders. His wife, shuddering, excuses him on the pretext of a malady to which he is occasionally subject: the affrighted guests withdraw.

The three witches re-appear, and, during their unhallowed rites, a cry without a name proceeds from the earth, and re-assures Macbeth in equivocal terms; none of woman born can ever harm Macbeth; nor will he ever be vanquished until the wood of Birnam shall come to the hill of Dunsinane. Like to Saul, Macbeth exults in the predictions of these modern pythonesses.

He desires, however, to verify the prediction that the sons of Banquo shall be kings .... The witches show to him a long succession of kings, sons and grandsons of Banquo. They then vanish.

"Macb. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!"

Macbeth hears that Macduff, one of the companions of Duncan's sons, who are about to march against the king to avenge their father's death, has taken to flight. He determines to put to death Lady Macduff and her children.

Previously to the arrival of the murderers, Lady Macduff is conversing with her son.

"LADY MACD. Sirrah, your father's dead;
And what will you do now? How will you live?

SON. As birds do, mother.

L. MACD. What, with worms and flies?

SON. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

L. MACD. Poor bird! thou'dst never fear the net, nor lime,
The pit-fall, nor the gin.

SON. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. MACD. Yes, he is dead; how wilt thou do for a father?

SON. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

L. MACD. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

SON. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

L. MACD. Thou speak'st with all thy wit; and yet i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

SON. Was my father a traitor, mother?

L. MACD. Ay, that he was.

SON. What is a traitor?

L. MACD. Why, one that swears and lies.

SON. And be all traitors, that do so?

L. MACD. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

SON. And must they all be hanged, that swear and lie?

L. MACD. Every one.

SON. Who must hang them?

L. MACD. Why, the honest men.

SON. Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men, and hang up them.

L. MACD. Now God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

SON. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

L. MACD. Poor prattler! how thou talk'st."

This candid and sublime answer of the child, prior to the verse of Racine in *Athalie*,—

"To the bird's young He gives their food,"

equals the latter and even surpasses it, for in it there is no declamation. The invention, moreover, belongs to Shakspeare. But Racine knew nothing of it: he cannot therefore be accused of plagiarism. In Shakspeare, nature invented better than rhetoric can.

HERE the poet transports us to England and makes us witness a scēne, evidently legendary, between Macduff and Malcolm, the escaped son of Duncan, to whom the former has gone to offer the crown of Scotland. Malcolm, in order to test Macduff, and to baffle the snare which he imagines is set for him, depicts himself, in his answers, as a wretch capable of every debauchery and of every crime that could be prejudicial to his future subjects. Would the Scotch be so insane as to bestow the crown upon such a man? Macduff, in indignation, withdraws his proposal. Malcolm then calls him back and tells him that his

object was merely to try him. They concert together to march, at the head of six thousand men, against the tyrant, at his castle of Dunsinane.

Enter ROSSE. MACDUFF *questioning him.*

"Be not a niggard of your speech: How goes it?

ROSSE. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

MAL. Be it their comfort,
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men;
An older, and a better soldier, none
That Christendom gives out.

ROSSE. 'Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words,
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

MACD. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief,
Due to some single breast?

ROSSE. No mind that's honest,
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

MACD. If it be mine,

Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

ROSSE. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which will possess them with the heaviest sound,
That ever yet they heard.

MACD. Humph! I guess at it.

ROSSE. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd; to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

MAL. Merciful Heaven!—
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

MACD. My children too?

ROSSE. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

MACD. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

ROSSE. I have said.

MAL. Be comforted.
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

MACD. He has no children.—All my pretty ones?
Did you say, all?—O hell-kite!—All?
What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop?

MAL. Dispute it like a man.

MACD. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,

That were most precious to me.—Did Heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls: Heaven rest them now!

MAL. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACD. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue!—But, gentle heaven,
Cut short all intermission; front to front,
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland, and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

MAL. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave: Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
The night is long, that never finds the day. [*Exeunt.*"

We are again transported into Scotland, to the royal castle of Macbeth, that we may witness two catastrophes, that of the king and that of his wife.

The queen's doctor is called, in order to watch over her during her madness.

"DOCT. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN. It is an accustomed action with her to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark, she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One! Two; Why, then 'tis time to do't:——Hell is murky; —Fye, my lord, fye! a soldier and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife: Where is she now?——What, will these hands ne'er be clean? —No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. 'Pray God, it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep, who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your night-

gown; look not so pale: — I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out of his grave.

DOCT. Even so?

LADY M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand; What's done, cannot be undone: To bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

DOCT. Will she go now to bed?

GENT. Directly.

DOCT. Foul whisperings are abroad: Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine, than the physician.—
God, God, forgive us all!"

One feels that she is about to die of the death she gave to Duncan.

WE witness all the trouble of mind and instability of purpose in Macbeth, wishing sometimes one thing, and at other times another, but ever brave and resolved to combat the English forces advancing towards his abode. He is informed of the end of the delirium of the queen,—her death.

"MACB. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.—
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.——

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESS. Gracious my lord,
I shall report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

MACB. Well, say, sir.

MESS. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

MACB. Liar, and slave! (*Striking him.*)

MESS. Let me endure your wrath if't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming:
I say, a moving grove.

MACB. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.—
I pull in resolution; and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: *Fear not, till Birnam wood*
Do come to Dunsinane:—and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
If this, which he avouches, does appear,
There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.—
Ring the alarum-bell:—Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The same. A plain before the Castle.*

Enter with drums and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, *&c., and their army, with boughs.*

MAL. Now near enough; your leavy screens throw down,
And show like those you are:—You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff, and we,
Shall take upon us what else remains to do,
According to our order.

SIW. Fare you well,—
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

MACD. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.
[*Exeunt. Alarums continued.*

SCENE VII.—*The same. Another part of the plain.*

Enter MACBETH.

MACB. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.—What's he,
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter Young SIWARD.

YO. SIW. What is thy name?

MACB. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

YO. SIW. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name,
Than any is in hell.

MACB. My name's Macbeth..

YO. SIW. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

MACB. No, nor more fearful.

YO. SIW. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

(*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*)

MACB. Thou wast born of woman.—
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

MACD. That way the noise is:—Tyrant, show thy face:
If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kernes, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves; either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again unheeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited: Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarum.*

Enter MALCOLM *and Old* SIWARD.

SIW. This way, my lord; — the castle's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

MAL. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

SIW. Enter, sir, the castle. [*Exeunt. Alarums.*

Re-enter MACBETH.

MACB. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

MACD. Turn, hell-hound, turn.

MACB. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

MACD. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! (*They fight.*)

MACB. Thou losest labour:
As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

MACD. Despair thy charm;

And let the angel, whom thou still hast served,
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

MACB. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.—I'll not fight with thee.

MACD. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole; and underwrit,
Here you may see the tyrant.

MACB. I'll not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: Before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries, *Hold, enough.*

[*Exeunt, fighting.*

Retreat. Flourish. Re-enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *Old* SIWARD, ROSSE, LENOX, ANGUS, CATHNESS, MENTETH, *and Soldiers.*

MAL. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

SIW. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MAL. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSSE. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

SIW. Then he is dead?

ROSSE. Ay, and brought off the field; your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIW. Had he his hurts before?

ROSSE. Ay, on the front.

SIW. Why, then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

MAL. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

SIW. He's worth no more;
They say he parted well, and paid his score:
So, God be with him!—Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with Macbeth's head on a poll.*

MACD. Hail, king! for so thou art: Behold, where stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine,—
Hail, king of Scotland!

ALL. King of Scotland, hail ! " *(Flourish.)*

Such is *Macbeth !* It is crime ! it is remorse ! it is the weakness of the strong man opposed to the seductions of a passionate and perverse woman. Especially is it the immediate expiation of crime through the occult vengeance of God. In it one feels the invincible honesty of Shakspeare. The poet is in intelligence with God.

As a dramatic conception, however, *Macbeth* is far from equalling *Hamlet.* The feigned madness of Hamlet, the weakness of his mother, and the tears and death of Ophelia, are tragic elements very different in regard to their fertility in situations to the two heavy crimes of Macbeth, put forward purely and simply. The witches are at a great distance from the necessary apparition of the ghost of the king, Hamlet's father, who governs and enlightens the at first wavering resolution of his son. The *dénouement* alone is weak, hurried, and confused. We perceive that the poet is puzzled to get rid of that mass of guilty, half-guilty, and innocent people who can no longer live because they can no longer either reign innocently or with propriety be united, as in the case of Ophelia and Hamlet, her father's unintentional murderer. He throws them all to the infernal gods, with little regard for probability; nevertheless, this play is the most tragic tragedy of any stage. Macbeth is the fatality of crime. M. Jules Lacroix has recently immortalized it a-fresh in our tongue, with a talent that does not blush to acknowledge the source of its inspiration.

What matters it whether this inspiration come from Athens or from London? *Orestes* or *Macbeth* are but names, he who makes them speak and act, in whatever language it may be, is the true creator.

After these immortal master-works of Shakspeare, some dramas of Latin origin, such as *Julius Cæsar, Othello, King Lear,* vie with each other for the admiration of the universe; we will not analyze them. It is impossible, however, not to observe in the characters of Julius Cæsar, Mark Antony, Brutus, and Cassius, the extraordinary comprehension of the statesman which Shakspeare had derived from Plutarch: he understood Rome and the Roman people as though he had been born in the *Quirinal.* Read the clever speech of Antony to the Roman people, at the commencement of which Antony seems to sound his audience, and to have the intention of blaming Cæsar, and at the conclusion of which he reads the will of the dictator in favour of the people, shows his gown pierced with daggers, and ends by causing the benches and the tribune to be broken up for the purpose of firing the houses of Cæsar's murderers. There is nothing finer, because there is nothing more true in history relative to the skill of the political orator and the versatility of the people.

As to Othello, it is but the king of melodramas. An old Moor, who has rendered good service to the

republic of Venice, inspires Desdemona, the daughter of a Venetian citizen, with an ardent and sincere passion, and marries her. He has in his service a vile traitor of the name of Iago, who fears the influence exercised over the Moor by his bride, and who seeks to awaken in him odious suspicions of the fidelity of Desdemona. Othello is sent by the Republic to Cyprus, in order to defend that city against the Turkish fleet. The fleet is overwhelmed by a tempest. Othello, accompanied by his brave and faithful lieutenant Cassio, arrives at the island; Iago by his machinations succeeds in giving the appearance of guilt to Desdemona and the innocent Cassio, Othello falls into that jealous and gloomy fury which is said to be a characteristic of his race.

Here is the last scene of this abominable butchery rather than tragedy; in it there is horror, but little talent, we see and hear the acts and the furious cries of a madman who stifles the woman he adores; horror alone has attached the people to this abomination. Here it is that the crime is carried into execution; here is the whole tragedy in the last scenes; you will judge of it for yourselves. It is at a thousand leagues from Hamlet and even from Macbeth.

A Bedchamber: Desdemona in bed, asleep. A light burning.

Enter OTHELLO.

"OTH. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood;

Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
(*Takes off his sword.*)
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thine,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat,
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd thy rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It needs must wither:—I'll smell it on the tree.—
(*Kissing her.*)
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword!—One more, one more.—
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after:—One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: This sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love.—She wakes—

DES. Who's there? Othello?

OTH. Ay, Desdemona.

DES. Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTH. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

DES. Ay, my lord.

OTH. If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to Heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

DES. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

OTH. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No,—Heaven forefend!—I would not kill thy soul.
DES. Talk you of killing?
OTH. Ay, I do.
DES. Then Heaven
Have mercy on me!
OTH. Amen, with all my heart!
DES. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.
OTH. Humph!
DES. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so: Why I should fear, I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not: but yet, I feel, I fear.
OTH. Think on thy sins.
DES. They are loves I bear to you.
OTH. Ay, and for that thou diest.
DES. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.—
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.
OTH. Peace, and be still!
DES. I will so: What's the matter?
OTH. That handkerchief, which I so loved, and gave thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.
DES. No, by my life and soul:
Send for the man and ask him.
OTH. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury: thou'rt on thy death-bed.

DES.. Ay, but not yet to die.

OTH. Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin:
For to deny each article with oath,
Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DES. Then, Lord have mercy on me!

OTH. I say, amen!

DES. And have you mercy too—I never did
Offend you in my life: never loved Cassio,
But with such general warranty of Heaven
As I might love: I never gave him token.

OTH. By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart
And makest me call, what I intend to do,
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:
I saw the handkerchief.

DES. He found it then;
I never gave it him:—Send for him hither,
And let him confess a truth.

OTH. He hath confess'd.

DES. What, my lord?

OTH. That he hath—used thee.

DES. How? unlawfully?

OTH. Ay.

DES. He'll not say so.

OTH. No, his mouth is stopp'd:
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.

DES. My fear interprets then,—What, is he dead?

OTH. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge

Had stomach for them all.

DES. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone.

OTH. Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

DES. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

OTH. Down, strumpet!

DES. Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night.

OTH. Nay, if you strive,—

DES. But half an hour.

OTH. Being done,

There is no pause.

DES. But while I say one prayer.

OTH. It is too late. (*He smothers her.*)

EMIL. (*within*). My lord! my lord! what ho! my lord! my lord!

OTH. What noise is this?—Not dead? not yet quite dead?

I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.—
So, so.

EMIL. (*within*). What ho! my lord, my lord!

OTH. Who's there?

EMIL. (*within*). O, my good lord, I would speak a word with you.

OTH. Yes;—'tis Emilia:—by and by.—She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
I think, she stirs again:—No.—What's the best?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:

O insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

EMIL. (*within*). I do beseech you, I may speak with you,
O good my lord!

OTH. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia:—
Soft,—by and by: Let me the curtains draw.—
Where art thou? What's the matter with thee now?
(*Unlocks the door.*)

Enter EMILIA.

EMIL. O, good my lord, yonder's foul murder done.

OTH. What? now?

EMIL. But now, my lord!

OTH. It is the very error of the moon:
She comes more near the earth than she was wont;
And makes men mad.

EMIL. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young Venetian,
Call'd Roderigo.

OTH. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd?

EMIL. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

OTH. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DES. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

EMIL. Alas! what cry is that?

OTH. That! what?

EMIL. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice:—
Help! help! ho!—O lady, speak again!

Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

DES. A guiltless death I die.

EMIL. O, who hath done
This deed?

DES. Nobody: I myself; farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord! O, farewell. (*Dies.*)

OTH. Why, how should she be murder'd?

EMIL. Alas, who knows?

OTH. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

EMIL. She said so; I must needs report the truth.

OTH. She's 'like a liar, gone to burning hell:
'Twas I that kill'd her.

EMIL. O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!

OTH. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

EMIL. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTH. She was false as water.

EMIL. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

OTH. Cassio did tup her: ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity: Thy husband knew it all.

EMIL. My husband?

OTH. Thy husband.

EMIL. That she was false to wedlock?

OTH. Ay, with Cassio.
Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

EMIL. My husband?

OTH. Ay, 'twas he that told me first;
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMIL. My husband?

OTH. What needs this iterance, woman? I say, thy husband.

EMIL. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!—
My husband say, that she was false?

OTH. He, woman;
I say, thy husband: Dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMIL. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a-day! he lies to the heart;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTH. Ha!

EMIL. Do thy worst;
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

OTH. Peace, you were best.

EMIL. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives;—Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor has kill'd my mistress; Murder! murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, *and* IAGO.

MON. What is the matter?—How now, general?

EMIL. O, you are come, Iago? you have done well,

That men must lay their murders on your neck.

GRA. What is the matter?

EMIL. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false:
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain;
Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO. I told him what I thought; and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMIL. But did you ever tell him, she was false?

IAGO. I did.

EMIL. You told a lie; an odious, damned lie;
Upon my soul, a lie; a wicked lie:—
She false with Cassio!—Did you say with Cassio?

IAGO. With Cassio, mistress: Go to, charm your tongue.

EMIL. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak;
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

ALL. O Heavens forefend!

EMIL. And your reports have set the murder on.

OTH. Nay, stare not, masters; it is true, indeed.

GRA. 'Tis a strange truth.

MON. O monstrous act!

EMIL. Villainy, villainy, villainy!—
I think upon't,—I think,—I smell't;—O villainy!—
I thought so then;—I'll kill myself for grief.—
O villainy, villainy!

IAGO. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

EMIL. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak;
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now:—

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTH. O! O! O! (*Hanging over his wife.*)

EMIL. Nay, lay thee down, and roar;
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTH. O, she was foul! (*Rising.*)
I scarce did know you, uncle: There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd:
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRA. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead;
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

OTH. 'Tis pitiful; but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed: Cassio confess'd it:
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

EMIL. O Heaven! O heavenly powers!

IAGO. Come, hold your peace.

EMIL. 'Twill out, 'twill out;—I hold my peace, sir? no;
No, I will speak as liberal as the air;
Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO. Be wise, and get you home.

EMIL. I will not. (*Iago offers to stab his wife.*)
GRA. Fye!
Your sword upon a woman?
EMIL. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of,
I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
For often, with a solemn earnestness
(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle),
He begg'd of me to steal it.
IAGO. Villainous whore!
EMIL. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
And I did give 't my husband.
IAGO. Filth, thou liest.
EMIL. By Heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?
[*Iago stabs Emilia, and then runs out.*
OTH. Are there no stones in heaven,
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!
GRA. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.
EMIL. Ay, ay; O, lay me by my mistress' side!
GRA. He's gone, but his wife's killed.
MON. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.
[*Exeunt Montano and Gratiano.*
OTH. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword:—
But why should honour outlive honesty?

Let it go all.

EMIL. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in music;—*Willow, willow, willow.*—
Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss as I speak true;
So speaking as I think I die,—I die. (*Dies.*)

OTH. I have another weapon in this chamber,
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper;—
O, here it is:—Uncle, I must come forth.

GRA. (*within*). If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear;
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTH. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

GRA. What is the matter?

OTH. Behold! I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,
That, with this little arm, and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop:—But, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.—
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires:—Where should Othello go?

Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity.—
O cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?
Dead? O! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a chair, and Officers, with* IAGO, *prisoner.*

LOD. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

OTH. That's he, that was Othello; here I am.

LOD. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

OTH. I look down towards his feet:—but that's a fable:—
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

(*Othello wounds Iago.*)

LOD. Wrench his sword from him.

IAGO. I bleed, sir: but not kill'd.

OTH. I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

LOD. O thou Othello, that was once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a cursed slave,
What shall be said to thee?

OTH. Why, anything:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

LOD. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy:
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

OTH. Ay.

CAS. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

OTH. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray you, demand that demi-devil,
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

IAGO. Demand me nothing: What you know, you know:
From this time forth I never will speak word.

LOD. What? not to pray?

GRA. Torments will ope your lips.

OTH. Well, thou dost best.

LOD. Sir, you shall understand what hath befallen,
Which, as I think, you know not: Here is a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;
And here, another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

OTH. O, villain!

CAS. Most heathenish, and most gross!

LOD. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

OTH. O the pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

CAS. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd, but even now,

That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

OTH. O fool! fool! fool!

CAS. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,—
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

LOD. You must forsake this room, and go with us;
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his: You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state:—Come, bring him away.

OTH. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it;
No more of that:—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down ought in malice: then must you speak
Of one, that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum: Set you down this;

And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him—thus. (*Stabs himself.*)

LOD. O bloody period!

GRA. All, that's spoke, is marr'd.

OTH. I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee:—No way but this, (*Falling upon Desdemona.*)
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. (*Dies.*)

CAS. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

LOD. O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look to the tragic loading of this bed; (*To Iago.*)
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;—
Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed to you.—To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture,—O enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard; and, to the state,
This heavy act with heavy heart relate." [*Exeunt.*

In all this there is nothing but physical horror. One is not poet for so little; so far as this goes, butchers might make the greatest tragedies in the world.

The historical plays, based upon the history of England, are, in my opinion, far superior to Othello.

THE plays based upon imagination or pure fancy are melodramas which are in turn amusing or terrible, and which give a transcendant idea of the genius of the popular writer: more especially this applies to *Measure for Measure, The Midsummer Night's Dream,* and, above all, to *The Tempest.* Let us briefly scan over the latter, and mark what a fertility of imagination is displayed in it!

One of the most sagacious and reflective writers of the French Academy, M. de Pongerville, speaks as follows in reference to this play:—

"Prospero, duke of Milan, preferring the study of magic to the art of reigning, allows himself to be dethroned by his brother Antonio. Banished, wandering upon the sea with his child, the young Miranda, Prospero lands upon a desert island, which belonged to a sort of amphibious savage, named Caliban, the monstrous son of one of the genii, destroyed by the spirits of the air. Prospero reduces this Caliban to servitude, and makes him his slave. In the island, a spirit of the air, being imprisoned within the trunk of a tree, is delivered by means of the magic art of Prospero. This spirit, named Ariel, devotes himself through gratitude to the service of Prospero. Caliban is the servitor grossly bound to earth; Ariel, the pure intelligence executing the will of his master throughout the air. These two personages, admirably contrasted, represent the brutishness of ignorance and of vice, and the quick and brilliant lightness of intelligence. Miranda, within her desert island, under the cherishing care of her powerful father, becomes at the

age of 15 a marvel of beauty, innocence, and grace. Alonzo, who has ascended the throne of Naples, his son Ferdinand, Antonio, the usurper of the sceptre of Milan and Sebastian, brother to the king of Naples, traverse the sea. Prospero learns this through his magic art, and commands his servant Ariel to raise a tempest which shall cast his guilty family upon the island. His orders are obeyed; the travellers, separated from each other when the vessel is wrecked, are, without knowing it, borne to the shore. Ferdinand becomes the fellow-slave of Caliban; the heaviest tasks are imposed upon him. Miranda perceives and pities, watches over and protects him. A violent love for each other, inspired by Prospero himself, is kindled within their breasts. The king of Naples, Sebastian, Antonio, and their suite wander over another part of the island, watched by invisible sprites. The perfidious Antonio urges Sebastian to slay the king during his sleep. Ariel, who is sent by Prospero, awakens the king; the traitors defer the execution of their crime until the following night. The travellers, pressed by hunger, seat themselves at a table which several phantoms had covered with viands; but Ariel, in the form of a harpy, comes to reproach them with their crimes, and to inform them that the wrongs of Prospero are here to be avenged, after which he disappears amidst thunder. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the attempt of the drunken sailors, who, with the aid of Caliban, wish to make themselves masters of the island, and, for the second time, to despoil Prospero whom they do not recognize. But

the omniscience of the former duke of Milan baffles their plots; he commands Ariel to bring to him all the other travellers. He then reveals himself to his enemies, pardons them, unites Ferdinand to Miranda, and returns to Italy with his happy and repentant family. The most remarkable characteristic of this play is the character of the young Miranda; the charming scenes between her and Ferdinand, the solemn words of Prospero, the imprecations of Caliban, a creation so original and yet so poetic, the ravishing ditties of Ariel, which inspired *Trilby* to M. Charles Nodier, offer a most varied and animated tableau.

"Between all great geniuses, of all times and of all nations, there exists a certain family resemblance which is perpetuated in their productions. Thus, Miranda reminds one of Nausicaa, in the Odyssey, that royal maiden who, with such nobility and grace, bends herself to the humblest domestic duties, and who, far from flying when terror disperses her companions, awaits the approach of the suppliant stranger, believing that in him she sees an unfortunate being whom she may help, and thus becomes a guide to the hero of Ithaca. The daughter of Alcinous proves that it is possible to associate greatness with duty, and that simple virtue and touching kindness constitute woman's most precious ornament and the most worthy accompaniment of beauty. The Miranda of Shakspeare, as noble, as pure, as ravishing as Homer's Nausicaa, has yet known no palace beyond her father's grotto, no sceptre save the wand of the enchanter, to whom she owes happiness and life; but her heart has

divined all that is right and praiseworthy; it has become the sanctuary of every generous feeling. Before she has become acquainted with misfortune, the instinct of virtue teaches her to relieve it. Nausicaa passes with dignity from the steps of a throne to the most irksome domestic duties; Miranda, from the obscurity which surrounded her simple youth, ascends to grandeur without losing anything of her charming candour.

"Created by the caprice of a sublime imagination, Miranda is nevertheless not beyond the limits of human nature; although she is placed in an ideal sphere, her perfections belong to her sex. A daughter of genius, she possesses all its fascinations; an object of enthusiasm and love, this undefinable marvel appears to us like one of those delicious dreams which, in the absence of our habitual impressions, fill us with delights which are above those of earth. The pearls of dew hanging upon the trembling leaves, the dazzling snow wafted upon the air, do not more escape the analysis of art than does the character of Miranda.

"Within the savage solitude which divides her from the universe, her childish play, with the exception of her father's watchful glance, had been witnessed only by the denizens of the forests, the birds, the mysterious zephyrs, the amphibious slave subjugated by her father's art, and the waves upon the beach which so often caressed her delicate limbs.

"Pure as the fresh bud which no breath has yet touched, artless and ingenuous as Galatea, ceasing to be marble and as yet unacquainted with love, Miranda

knows only her father; he is all the world to her; the rest of humankind is revealed to her only in her own heart. She has no suspicion that man can be evil; and thus, when for the first time a man appears to her gaze, she will not fear him, she will not fly from him; if he be in danger she will try to help him; her forehead will be coloured only by a chaste and tender emotion which she cannot explain to herself; she will no more fear being seen by him than the flower fears to bloom, than the tree shrinks from crowning itself with its fruits.

"Treasures of tenderness, intelligence, grace, and nobility, shine within this enchanting being; every germ of evil has been banished from her. Yet it is not an angel that genius has wished to create; it is not one of those fictions in which poetry associates fabulous charms with the gifts of nature; Miranda is but a woman, and it is precisely this which makes her so admirable, for the ideal surprises and delights the mind, the true alone can touch and charm the heart.

"Miranda, in the presence of the first man that appears to her, is another Eve, perfectly chaste in her innocence, imposing in her artless simplicity. Yielding to a gentle wonderment, led on by an instinct of curiosity, she questions both her own thoughts and the stranger who is himself contemplating her. Is it a companion, a friend, that fate has sent her? She hopes it may be so. It is still Eve, awakening to life, lying amidst the flowers, inquiring of all that surrounds her: Who am I? where am I? and seeking that support, that guide, of which nature tells her, Miranda, pure as

Eve, experiences a feeling of tenderness ennobled by benevolence; she loves to exchange sympathizing glances with her mysterious guest; but, more especially does she wish to protect him from the perils and evils which threaten him. She has no idea of beauty, and yet she finds him beautiful; is it a spirit descended from heaven, an impalpable being? Her heart causes her to hope that it is not so. As the blind man, whom art suddenly renders clear-sighted, feels that light is in future indispensable to him, Miranda feels that it is now impossible for her to live without him who thus charms her; she obtains a new existence, or rather she acquires at once life and love. Docile to this divinity, of whom she knows no more than did Eve, she will submit to his commands. The mother of men, her hand within that of a friend, followed him to the nuptial couch unveiled save by the balmy exhalations breathed forth from the flowers; and Miranda is ready to entrust her chastity to Hymen, to call as witnesses to this august mystery the silence of the solitude, the glory of the heavens, the ocean, the light spirits inhabiting the air, and that plaintive bird, the songster of the night.

"The tutelary guide whose magic power watches over Miranda, from the depths of his dim solitude, leads her to a throne to which virtue, gladness, and love accompany her."

THE scene opens upon a vessel tossed by the seas. The tempest roars, the skipper sends the terrified

passengers to their cabins, and encourages the mariners in their task. In everything one here perceives the poet of a nation of sailors, acquainted with all the technical terms used on board ship.

The vessel is wrecked upon a desert island. The king of Naples, his son Ferdinand, and Antonio, the usurping duke of Milan, escape from it with their followers and the sailors. Prospero and his daughter Miranda, a group of aërial spirits, Caliban, a deformed savage, are the only inhabitants of the island. These are the actors in this phantasmagoric drama.

Miranda and her father Prospero converse relative to the events of the night, before they have yet seen the wrecked travellers.

SCENE II.—*A portion of the island before the grotto of Prospero.*

Enter PROSPERO *and* MIRANDA.

"MIRA. If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them:
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. Oh, I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer!—a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. Oh, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perish'd.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
The freighting souls within her.

PRO. Be collected;
No more amazement: tell your piteous heart,
There's no harm done.
MIRA. O, woe the day!
PRO. No harm.
I have done nothing but in care of thee,
(Of thee, my dear one! thee, my daughter!) who
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing
Of whence I am; nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
And thy no greater father.
MIRA. More to know
Did never meddle with my thoughts.
PRO. 'Tis time
I should inform thee further. Lend thy hand,
And pluck my magic garment from me. So;
(*Lays down his mantle.*)
Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.
The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd
The very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have with such provision in mine art
So safely order'd, that there is no soul,—
No, not so much perdition as an hair,
Betid to any creature in the vessel
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down;
For thou must now know further.
MIRA. You have often
Begun to tell me what I am; but stopp'd,
And left me to a bootless inquisition;

Concluding, *Stay—not yet.*

PRO. The hour's now come;
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear:
Obey, and be attentive. Canst thou remember
A time before we came unto this cell?
I do not think thou canst; for then thou wast not
Out three years old.

MIRA. Certainly, sir, I can.

PRO. By what? by any other house, or person?
Of anything the image tell me, that
Hath kept with thy remembrance.

MIRA. 'Tis far off;
And rather like a dream than an assurance,
That my remembrance warrants: Had I not
Four or five women once, that tended me?

PRO. Thou hadst, and more, Miranda: but how is it,
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou remember'st aught, ere thou camest here,
How thou camest here, thou may'st.

MIRA. But that I do not.

PRO. Twelve years since, Miranda, twelve years since,
Thy father was the duke of Milan, and
A prince of power.

MIRA. Sir, are not you my father?

PRO. Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said—thou wast my daughter: and thy father
Was duke of Milan, and his only heir
A princess; no worse issued.

MIRA. O, the heavens!
What foul play had we, that we came from thence?
Or blessed was't we did?
PRO. Both, both, my girl:
By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,
But blessedly holp hither.
MIRA. O, my heart bleeds
To think o' the teen that I have turn'd you to,
Which is from my remembrance! Please you, further.
PRO. My brother, and thy uncle, call'd Antonio,—
I pray thee, mark me,—that a brother should
Be so perfidious!—he whom, next thyself,
Of all the world I loved, and to him put
The manage of my state; as, at that time,
Through all the signiories it was the first,
And Prospero the prime duke; being so reputed
In dignity, and for the liberal arts
Without a parallel: those being all my study,
The government I cast upon my brother,
And to my state grew stranger, being transported,
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle—
Dost thou attend me?"

He describes to his daughter how, when duke of Milan, he was betrayed by his brother Antonio, who, by the aid of the king of Naples, dethroned him, and not daring to slay him, caused him to be placed with his child Miranda in a dismantled vessel, and sent adrift upon the Adriatic. Heaven protected them and enabled him to land upon this solitary island, where he had lived for 14 years, thanks to the spirits of the air and to a virtuous counsellor of the king of

Naples, by name Gonzalo, who supplied him with provisions and books.

Miranda listens in wonderment, and, after expressing her gratitude to Gonzalo, her father's saviour, falls asleep.

During Miranda's sleep, Prospero summons a spirit of the air, Ariel, and commands him to assume the form of a nymph of the sea, invisible to all save himself. He then calls the brutal giant Caliban, whom he has constrained to serve him, and orders him to bring wood to the cell. Caliban murmurs, but obeys, Miranda awakens. Ariel reappears under the form of a water-nymph, and sings in the ears of the wrecked men, and to Miranda and the son of the king of Naples, Ferdinand, with whom Miranda has fallen in love.

These two tell each other of their love. Prospero, the father of the virginal Miranda, smiles upon this union, but affects to cross it in order to heighten its value in the eyes of the two lovers.

"Thou hast come hither as a spy," says he to Ferdinand.

"MIRA. There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple;
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with't

PRO. Hence, hang not on my garments!

MIRA. Sir, have pity;
I'll be his surety.

PRO. Silence! one word more
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!

An advocate for an impostor? hush!
Thou think'st there are no more such shapes as he,
Having seen but him and Caliban. Foolish wench!
To the most of men this is a Caliban,
And they to him are angels.

MIRA. My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.

PRO. Come on; obey: (*To Ferd.*)
Thy nerves are in their infancy again,
And have no vigour in them.

FER. So they are:
My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,
The wreck of all my friends, or this man's threats,
To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,
Might I but through my prison once a day
Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth
Let liberty make use of; space enough
Have I in such a prison.

PRO. It works:—Come on.—
Thou hast done well, fine Ariel!—Follow me.—
(*To Ferd. and Mir.*)
Hark, what thou else shalt do me. (*To Ariel.*)

MIRA. Be of comfort:
My father's of a better nature, sir,
Than he appears by speech; this is unwonted,
Which now came from him.

PRO. Thou shalt be as free
As mountain winds: but then exactly do
All points of my command.

ARI. To the syllable.

PRO. Come, follow: speak not for him." [*Exeunt.*

THE ancient counsellor of the king of Naples, Gonzalo, creates, for the amusement of his companions, Utopias worthy of Plato or of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

"GON. Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—

ANT. He'd sow it with nettle-seed.

SEB. Or docks, or mallows.

GON. And were the king of it, what would I do?

SEB. 'Scape being drunk, for want of wine.

GON. I' the commonwealth, I would by contraries
Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; no use of service,
Of riches, or of poverty; no contracts,
Successions; bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure:
No sovereignty:—

SEB. And yet he would be king on't.

ANT. The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GON. All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foizon, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

SEB. No marrying 'mong his subjects?

ANT. None, man; all idle; whores and knaves.

GON. I would with such perfection govern, sir,
To excel the golden age.
SEB. 'Save his majesty!
ANT. Long live Gonzalo!"
They laugh and fall asleep.

So we see that Utopias are not of yesterday. They are the result of imagination applied to State government. When men do not laugh at them, they shed their blood for their dreams.

THE enormous monster Caliban happens to roar. Some of the followers of the king, who hear him, cannot imagine what this creature can be, whether a man or a fish. One of them, Trinculo, to shelter himself from a storm which arises, creeps beneath the monster's gaberdine.

Then comes a delicious scene of love between Miranda and Ferdinand, during the absence of Prospero. Miranda is a dewdrop absorbed by the first ray of sunshine that falls upon it.

The king of Naples is found to have escaped the waves. Caliban, who conspires against the life of his master Prospero, is deceived by a false accomplice. Ariel, the genius of good, obeys Prospero in all things.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Before Prospero's Cell.*

Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, *and* MIRANDA.

"PRO. If I have too austerely punished you,
Your compensation makes amends; for I

Have given you here a thread of mine own life,
Or that for which I live; whom once again
I tender to thy hand. All thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Hast strangely stood the test: here, afore Heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,
Do not smile at me, that I boast her off,
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.

FER. I do believe it,
Against an oracle.

PRO. Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter. But
If thou dost break her virgin knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minister'd,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
Sour-eyed disdain, and discord, shall beshrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly,
That you shall hate it both: therefore, take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

FER. As I hope
For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strongest suggestion
Our worser genius can, shall never melt
Mine honour into lust; to take away
The edge of that day's celebration,
When I shall think, or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd,
Or night kept chain'd below."

Soft music is now heard, and a choir of aërial spirits act an allegorical drama.

"FER. This is a most majestic vision, and
Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold
To think these spirits?

PRO. Spirits, which by mine art
I have from their confines call'd to enact
My present fancies.

FER. Let me live here ever;
So rare a wonder'd father, and a wife,
Make this place Paradise."

By the aid of Ariel, Prospero causes himself to be recognized as the rightful duke of Milan, who was banished from his territory, and who took refuge in this island. He recognizes Gonzalo, to whom he owes the books from which he learned the power of his art.

"GON. All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement
Inhabits here: Some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country!

PRO. Behold, sir king,
The wronged duke of Milan, Prospero:
For more assurance that a living prince
Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;
And to thee, and thy company, I bid
A hearty welcome.

ALON. Whe'r thou beest he, or no,
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,
As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse
Beats, as of flesh and blood; and since I saw thee,
The affliction of my mind amends, with which,
I fear, a madness held me: this must crave

(An if this be at all) a most strange story.
Thy dukedom I resign; and do entreat
Thou pardon me my wrongs.—But how should
Be living, and be here? [Prospero
PRO. First, noble friend,
Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot
Be measured or confined.
GON. Whether this be,
Or be not, I'll not swear.
PRO. You do yet taste
Some subtilties o' the isle, that will not let you
Believe things certain.—Welcome, my friends all:
But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,
(*Aside to Seb. and Ant.*)
I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you
And justify you traitors; at this time
I'll tell no tales.
SEB. The devil speaks in him. (*Aside.*)
PRO. No:—
For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault,—all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,
Thou must restore.
ALON. If thou beest Prospero,
Give us particulars of thy preservation:
How thou hast met us here, who three hours since
Were wreck'd upon this shore; where I have lost,
How sharp the point of this remembrance is!
My dear son Ferdinand.
PRO. I am woe for't, sir.

ALON. Irreparable is the loss; and Patience
Says it is past her cure.
PRO. I rather think,
You have not sought her help; of whose soft grace
For the like loss, I have her sovereign aid,
And rest myself content.
ALON. You the like loss?
PRO. As great to me, as late; and, portable
To make the dear loss, have I means much weaker
Than you may call to comfort you; for I
Have lost my daughter.
ALON. A daughter?
O heavens! that they were living both in Naples,
The king and queen there! that they were, I wish
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed
Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?
PRO. In this last tempest. I perceive, these lords
At this encounter do so much admire,
That they devour their reason; and scarce think
Their eyes do offices of truth, their words
Are natural breath: but, howsoe'er you have
Been justled from your senses, know for certain
That I am Prospero, and that very duke
Which was thrust forth of Milan; who most strangely
Upon this shore, where you were wreck'd, was landed,
To be the lord on't. No more yet of this;
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;
This cell's my court: here have I few attendants,
And subjects none abroad: pray you, look in.

My dukedom since you have given me again,
I will requite you with as good a thing;
At least, bring forth a wonder, to content ye,
As much as me my dukedom.

The entrance of the Cell opens, and discovers FERDINAND *and* MIRANDA *playing at chess.*

MIRA. Sweet lord, you play me false.
FER. No, my dearest love
I would not for the world.
MIRA. Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
And I would call it fair play.
ALON. If this prove
A vision of the island, one dear son
Shall I twice lose.
SEB. A most high miracle.
FER. Though the seas threaten, they are merciful:
I have cursed them without cause. (*Fer. kneels to Alon.*)
ALON. Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Arise, and say how thou camest here.
MIRA. O wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!
PRO. 'Tis new to thee.
ALON. What is this maid, with whom thou wast at play?
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,
And brought us thus together?
FER. Sir, she's mortal:

But, by immortal Providence, she's mine:
I chose her, when I could not ask my father
For his advice, nor thought I had one. She
Is daughter to this famous duke of Milan,
Of whom so often I have heard renown,
But never saw before; of whom I have
Received a second life, and second father
This lady makes him to me.

ALON. I am hers;
But O, how oddly will it sound, that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

PRO. There, sir, stop;
Let us not burden our remembrances
With a heaviness that's gone.

GON. I have inly wept,
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,
And on this couple drop a blessed crown,
For it is you that have chalk'd forth the way
Which brought us hither!

ALON. I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

GON. Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue
Should become kings of Naples! O, rejoice
Beyond a common joy; and set it down
With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage
Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis:
And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife,
Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom,
In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves,
When no man was his own.

ALON. Give me your hands: (*To Fer. and Mira.*)
Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart

That doth not wish you joy!

GON. Be't so! Amen!

Re-enter ARIEL, *with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following.*

O look, sir, look, sir; here are more of us!
I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,
This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,
That swear'st grace o'erboard, but an oath on shore?
Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

BOATS. The best news is, that we have safely found
Our king and company; the next, our ship,—
Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split,—
Is tight, and yare, and bravely rigg'd as when
We first put out to sea.

ARI. Sir, all this service
Have I done since I went. *Aside.*
PRO. My tricksy spirit!

ALON. These are not natural events; they strengthen
From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither?

BOATS. If I did think, sir, I were well awake,
I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,
And (how, we know not) all clapp'd under hatches,
Where, but e'en now, with strange and several noises
Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,
And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,
We were awaked; straightway, at liberty:
Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld
Our royal, good, and gallant ship; our master
Capering to eye her. On a trice, so please you,

Even in a dream, were we divided from them,
And were brought moping hither.

ARI. Was't well done? (*Aside.*)

PRO. Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

ALON. This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod;
And there is in this business more than nature
Was ever conduct of: some oracle
Must rectify our knowledge.

PRO. Sir, my liege,
Do not infest your mind with beating on
The strangeness of this business; at pick'd leisure,
Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you
(Which to you shall seem probable) of every
These happen'd accidents: till when, be cheerful,
And think of each thing well.—Come hither, spirit;
Set Caliban and his companions free: (*Aside.*)
Untie the spell. (*Exit Ariel.*) How fares my gracious sir?
There are yet missing of your company
Some few odd lads, that you remember not.

Re-enter ARIEL, *driving in* CALIBAN, STEPHANO, *and* TRINCULO, *in their stolen apparel.*

STE. Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself, for all is but fortune:—Coragio, bully-monster, coragio!

TRIN. If there be true spies which I wear in my head, here's a goodly sight.

CAL. O Setebos, these be brave spirits, indeed!
How fine my master is! I am afraid
He will chastise me.

SEB. Ha, ha!

What things are these, my lord Antonio!
Will money buy them?

ANT. Very like, one of them
Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable.

PRO. Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,
Then say, if they be true:—This mis-shapen knave,—
His mother was a witch; and one so strong
That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
And deal in her command, without her power:
These three have robb'd me: and this demi-devil
(For he's a bastard one) had plotted with them
To take my life: two of these fellows you
Must know and own; this thing of darkness I
Acknowledge mine.

CAL. I shall be pinch'd to death.

ALON. Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?

SEB. He is drunk now: where had he wine?

ALON. And Trinculo is reeling ripe; where should they
Find this grand liquor, that hath gilded them?—
How camest thou in this pickle?

TRIN. I have been in such a pickle, since I saw you last, that, I fear me, will never out of my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.

SEB. Why, how now, Stephano? [cramp.

STE. O touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a

PRO. You'd be king of the isle, sirrah?

STE. I should have been a sore one then.

ALON. This is as strange a thing as e'er I look'd on.
(*Pointing to Caliban.*)

PRO. He is as disproportion'd in his manners,
As in his shape.—Go, sirrah, to my cell;
Take with you your companions; as you look
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

CAL. Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter,
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
And worship this dull fool!

PRO. Go to; away! [found it.

ALON. Hence, and bestow your luggage where you

SEB. Or stole it rather. [*Exeunt Cal. Ste. and Trin.*

PRO. Sir, I invite your highness and your train,
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
For this one night, which (part of it) I'll waste
With such discourse, as, I not doubt, shall make it
Go quick away,—the story of my life,
And the particular accidents, gone by,
Since I came to this isle; and in the morn,
I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,
Where I have hope to see the nuptial
Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;
And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave.

ALON. I long
To hear the story of your life, which must
Take the ear strangely.

PRO. I'll deliver all;
And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,
And sail so expeditious, that shall catch
Your royal fleet far off.—My Ariel,—chick,—

That is thy charge; then to the elements
Be free, and fare thou well!—(*Aside.*)—Please you draw near. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.—*Spoken by* PROSPERO.

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own;
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples: Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island, by your spell;
But release me from my bands,
With the help of your good hands.
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please: Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer;
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you, from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free."

THIS play, translated in prose and verse by a lady of rare talent, Madame Colet, whose pardon I ask for having borrowed from her work, is one of Shakspeare's most delightful compositions. It is all gracefulness and love. The translation was rightly undertaken by

a woman; a man's touch might have withered it. It is the drama of the most beautiful dreams, the agencies of nature in the tempest, the agencies of evil subdued in the person of Caliban, the agencies of goodness pardoning everything in the person of Prospero, the agencies of Providence impersonated in Ariel, innocence in Miranda, love in Ferdinand, and all these agencies admirably combined in an imaginary but likely adventure, to amuse the idle pit of an imaginative people. This is the work of Shakspeare.

The Merry Wives of Windsor is more real and more comic; it is the fertile mine whence the French stage derived *les Fausses Infidélités*, a play which is infinitely less rich in humour. It was Queen Elizabeth who, delighted with the character and the youthful vices of Falstaff, requested Shakspeare to exhibit him at an older period of life, in order that she might see how his superannuated foibles would modify this immortal creation of her poet. Shakspeare obeyed the queen, and with his hero, again found the same vein of admirable humour. England possessed her *Cervantes*, and Falstaff was the *Don Quixote* of boastfulness handed down to the ridicule of posterity.

The same year was destined to witness the deaths of the two original writers of France and of England, Cervantes died the same month as Shakspeare. Two great eclipses of the human race, without doubt, though they can scarcely be compared with each other. Cervantes, though he has written a long and

original parody upon a virtue which disappears amidst ridicule, was only the Aristophanes of Madrid. Ridicule can never be upon an equality with the ideal. Shakspeare gave to England both satire and his ideal creations; he sometimes made her laugh by his humour, but he made her think, feel, and weep during centuries which shall have no end. He can only be compared to Cervantes as a caricature can be compared with a painting; the caricature dies, but the painting is engraved, and lives for ever in a thousand impressions from the steel, the work is ever popular, and the name is imperishable!

Thus is Shakspeare!

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

1768—17th July, 1793.

IN a broad and populous street in the town of Caen, the capital of Lower Normandy, and at that time the centre of the Girondin Insurrection, there stood at the end of a court an ancient house, whose grey walls, worn with the inclemency of the weather, were split in many places. This house was called the "Grand Manoir." A stone fountain, moss-covered and ancient, occupied one angle of the court. A narrow low door, with a fluted archway, which discovered a spiral stone staircase leading to the storey above. Two diamond-paned windows, set in leaden frames, gave but a feeble light to the staircase and vast empty chambers beyond. This pale light impressed upon the habitation a character of age, ruin, and mysterious melancholy, with which the human mind naturally veils, as with a shroud, the cradle of great thoughts and great natures. It was there that, in

1793, resided a granddaughter of the great tragic French poet Pierre Corneille. Poets and heroes are of the same race. There is between them but this difference,—the idea and the act. One performs what the other has conceived,—it is the same thought. Women are naturally enthusiastic like the one, courageous like the other. Poetry, heroism, and love are of the same blood.

This house belonged to a poor widow, without children, aged and infirm, named Madame de Bretteville. With her resided, for some time, a young relative that she had taken to cheer her loneliness, and comfort her old age. This young girl was then 24 years old. Her grave, serene, and collected beauty, although brilliant, seemed to have received a tone from this austere habitation and retired life. There was in her something of an apparition. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who saw her on Sundays go to church with her aged aunt, or who saw her through the doorway, reading during long hours, in the quiet courtyard, sitting in the sunshine on the edge of the fountain, spoke of their admiration for her being mingled, even then, with prestige and respect. Was it a ray of light from that powerful mind that intimidated the vulgar eye? Was it the atmosphere of the soul spread over the features? Or was it the presentiment of a tragic destiny which shone beforehand on her brow?

This young girl was tall in stature, although with-

out being more so than is usual in the fine graceful women of Normandy. Grace and natural dignity accentuated, like an internal rhythm, her walk and deportment. The ardour of the South mingled in her complexion with the rich colours of the women of the North. Her hair seemed black when it was gathered in a mass round her head, or divided in two waves over her forehead. It seemed tinged with gold at the extremity of the tresses—as the ear appears darker and more brilliant than the wheat-stalk, as it stands in the sun. Her eyes, large and reaching to the temples, were of a colour changing like the water of the sea, which borrows its tint from the shadows of day; blue when thoughtful, black when animated. Long lashes, darker than her hair, gave depth and distance to her look. Her nose, united to the forehead by an almost imperceptible curve, was slightly raised towards the middle. Her lips were, with the utmost precision, portrayed by her Grecian mouth, the expression of which alternated equally, in a manner impossible to catch, between tenderness and severity, being capable of breathing the language either of love or of patriotism. Her chin, slightly raised, divided in two by a deep indentation, gave to the lower portion of her face an expression of masculine resolution, which contrasted with the feminine graces around it. Her cheeks were fresh with youth and the oval firmness of health. She blushed or turned pale with ease. Her skin was of a healthy mottled whiteness. Her broad chest, rather thin, presented a sculptural bust, scarcely undulated by the roundness of her sex.

Her arms were strong and muscular, her hands long, her fingers taper. Her costume, conformable with the mediocrity of her fortune, was of sober simplicity.

She confided in nature, and disdained all artificial caprice of fashion in the form of her dress. Those who have seen her when a girl paint her as uniformly dressed in a dark cloth robe, or habit, and a grey felt hat, turned up at the edge, and trimmed with black ribbons, like women of her rank wore at that time. The sound of her voice,—that living echo that concentrates a whole soul in the vibration of the air,—left a deep and tender impression on the ear of those to whom she spoke. They still speak of her voice, 10 years after having heard it, as of music, strange, ineffaceable, as engraved in their memory. She had in this instrument of the soul, notes so sonorous and grave, that to hear her was, say they, more than to see her, and that in her sound was a part of her beauty.

This young girl was named Charlotte Corday-d'Armont. Although of noble blood, she was born in a cottage called le Ronceray, in the village of Ligneries, not far from Argentan.

Her father, François de Corday-d'Armont, was one of those gentlemen whom poverty confounds with the peasant. The estate that he cultivated was an hereditary domain, which alone supported him. He united to these agricultural tastes those of literature and politics, much in request at that time among the educated nobility. He was longing for a revolution, and worried by inaction and poverty, wrote several

circumstantial works against despotism and the right of birth. These works were full of the spirit which was about to burst forth. He had in him a horror of superstition, the early ardour of a budding philosophy, the presentiment of a necessary revolution. Whether from insufficiency of genius, inequality of character, or the obstinacy of fortune that buries the finest talents, he never made his way through the events that followed.

He languished in his little fief of Ligneries, in the bosom of a family that grew larger every year. Five children, two sons and three daughters, of whom Charlotte was the second, made him feel daily the disadvantages, the sorrows of want.

His wife, Jacqueline Marie de Gouthier-des-Autiers, died in this struggle, leaving a father to his infant daughters, but leaving them more than orphans of that domestic tradition, that daily inspiration, that they lose when a mother dies.

Charlotte and her sisters still continued to reside some years at Ligneries, almost abandoned to nature, clothed in coarse linen, like other Norman girls, and, like them, raking and hoeing the garden, gleaning in the cornfield, and gathering apples in the season, from the confined orchards of their father's little domain. At length, necessity forced Monsieur de Corday to separate himself from his children. They entered, under the auspices of their nobility and indigence, a convent in Caen, of which Madame de Belzunce was abbess. This convent is called, "*l'Abbaye aux Dames*," of which the vast cloisters and splendid church of Roman architecture, was constructed by Matilda, the

wife of William the Conqueror, in 1066. After being deserted, degraded, and forgotten in ruins until 1830, it has since been magnificently restored, and forms, at the present time, one of the most splendid hospitals and monuments of the city of Caen.

CHARLOTTE was 13 years old. Those convents were then the true gynœceum of Christian women, where they lived, separated from the world, but listening to all its rumours and sharing in all its movements. Monastic life, full of sweet occupations, intimate friendships, enchanted the young girl for a time. Her ardent soul and impassioned imagination drew her into that state of dreamy contemplation in which one seems to perceive God. A state of mind that changes, under the affectionate influence of a superior, and the spirit of imitation,—in childhood,—to faith and exercises of devotion. The iron character of Madame Roland herself was softened before this heavenly fire. Charlotte, of a more tender nature, yielded still more easily. During some years she was a model of piety. She dreamt of nothing but the closing of her life, scarce opening at the first page, and of burying herself in this sepulchre where instead of death she would find repose, friendship, and happiness.

But the more her mind became strengthened, the more she plunged into thought, and the earlier she arrived at her conclusions. She fathomed the depth of her childhood's faith, and saw, beyond domestic dogmas, others, new, brilliant, sublime. She neither

abandoned God nor virtue, those two first passions of her soul, but she gave them other names and other forms.

Philosophy, which was then flooding France with its rays, entered, by the means of books then in fashion, the iron gratings of the monasteries. It was there that, more profoundly studied in the seclusion of the cloister, and in opposition to the littlenesses of monastic institutions, philosophy formed her most ardent adepts. These youths and maidens, in the triumph of general reason, saw their chains broken, and adored their regained liberty.

Charlotte formed ties of childhood's tender predilections which are like relations of the heart. Her friends were two young girls of noble family, but of humble fortunes like herself: Mademoiselles de Fandoas and De Forbin. The abbess, Madame de Belzunce, and her coadjutrix, Madame Doulcet de Pontécoulant, had distinguished Charlotte, and admitted her to those half-worldly societies which custom allowed abbesses to entertain among their relatives outside. Thus Charlotte had made the acquaintance of two young men, the nephews of those ladies: Monsieur de Belzunce, colonel of a cavalry regiment then in garrison in Caen, and Monsieur Doulcet de Pontécoulant, officer in the king's body-guard: the first so soon to be massacred in an *émeute* by the populace of Caen; the other, who afterwards accepted, with some reservation, the Revolution, entered the Legislative Assembly and the Convention, and endured exile and persecution in the cause of the Girondins.

At the time when the [illegible] mysteries were suppressed, Charlotte was [illegible] years old. Distress in her paternal home had increased with years. Her two brothers, engaged in the king's service, had emigrated. One of her sisters was dead. The other acted as housekeeper to her father at Argentan. The old aunt, Madame de Bretteville, had taken Charlotte to live with her at Caen. This aunt was without fortune, like the rest of her family. She lived in that obscurity and silence that left in doubt, to her nearest neighbours, the name and existence of the poor widow. Her age and infirmities rendered her life still more retired. One female servant alone waited on her, and was assisted by Charlotte in her care of the house. She gracefully received the ancient friends of the house. She accompanied her aunt in the evenings into those societies of the nobles of the town, that the fury of the populace had not entirely dispersed, and when it was permitted to the remnants of the *ancien régime* to meet to console each other and mourn. Charlotte, respectful before those regrets and superstitions of the past, never annoyed by an unkind word, but smiled in her heart, as she fed her mind with far different opinions. These became warmer and warmer every day. But her tenderness, the grace of her features, the childlike puerility of her manners, never exhibited the slightest symptoms of an *arrière pensée* under that joyous exterior. Her gentle gaiety brightened the home of her aged aunt like the morning rays of a stormy day, that shine the brighter the darker the evening may be.

Her domestic occupations over, her aunt conducted to and led home from church, Charlotte was free to think, and occupy her hours as she pleased. She passed her time in the courtyard and garden dreaming and reading. She was never disturbed or directed in anything, in her liberty, her opinions, her readings. The religious opinions of Madame de Bretteville were more habits than opinions. She carried them as she wore the costume of her time, but she did not impose them. Besides which, philosophy had, at this time, sapped to the core all belief in the minds of even the ancient nobility. The Revolution had thrown a doubt on all. People cared little for opinions that were every day crumbling away. And then the republican opinions of Charlotte's father had by degrees been instilled into his family. The family of De Corday leaned towards those new ideas. Madame de Bretteville herself concealed, beneath a decent regret for the *ancien régime*, a secret favour for the Revolution. She left her niece to study the works, opinions, and journals of her choice. Charlotte's age led her to read novels, which furnish ready-made dreams to the imagination of the idle. Her ideas led her to study the works of philosophy, which transform the vague instincts of humanity into the sublime theories of government; and works of history, which change the theories into actions, and ideas into men.

She found this double necessity of the mind and heart satisfied in Jean Jacques Rousseau, that philosopher of love and poet of politics; in Ragnal, that fanatic of humanity; in Plutarch, that personification

of history, who paints more than he relates, and who vivifies events and the characters of his heroes. These three books succeeded each other in her hands. She also read the light impassioned works of her time, as "Heloise" or "Faublas." But, although her imagination was roused, her soul lost nothing of its purity, nor her girlhood of its chastity. Feeling the necessity of love, inspired by and recognizing the first symptoms of love, her reserve, her dependence, and her poverty ever restrained the avowal of her sentiments. Her heart-strings might break, but she would violently uproot the first impression which it had received. Her love, crushed alike by the power of her will and fate, changed, not its nature, but its ideal. It became transformed into a vague and sublime devotion, to a dream of public happiness. Her heart was too large to contain nothing more than her own felicity. She would have it contain the felicity of an entire people. The fire with which she would have burned for one man, consumed her for her country. She concentrated these ideas more and more within herself, ever questioning what service she could render to humanity. The thirst for self-sacrifice had become her madness, her love, or her virtue. This sacrifice, bloody though it might be, she was resolved to accomplish. She had reached that state of mind which is the suicide of happiness, not for the sake of glory or ambition, like Madame Roland, but for the sake of liberty and humanity, like Judith or Epicharis. Nothing was wanting but the opportunity—she watched for it—and thought she had seized it.

It was the time when the Girondins were struggling with prodigious courage and eloquence against their enemies in the Convention. The presence of these proscribed and fugitive deputies, who had come to call on liberty against oppression, and inflamed the hearths of the departments to raise up defenders of the country, had raised to adoration the attachment of the city of Caen to the Girondins, and execration against Marat. These opinions, more English than Roman, the moderate and Attic republicanism of La Gironde contrasted with the cynicism of the Maratists. Instead of those men, either interested or sublime, who appeared to defend, in the breach, the last ramparts of society, the province was indignant to see a Marat, of the dregs of the people, triumphant over laws by sedition, crowned with impunity, carried in the arms of the people from the suburbs to the tribune, taking upon himself to dictate anarchy, spoliation, assassination, and threatening all independence, all property, all liberty, all life in the departments: all these convulsions, excesses, and terrors, had strongly moved the provinces of Normandy.

What had been wished for in Normandy before the 10th August, was far less the overthrow of the throne than an equable monarchical constitution. The city of Rouen, the capital of this province, was attached to Louis XVI., and had offered him an asylum in his fall. The scaffold of this prince had humiliated and saddened all good citizens. The other cities of this part of France were rich, industrial, and agri-

cultural. Peace and a navy were necessary to their prosperity. Thence came a secret disposition to re-establish an order of things which should unite the guarantees of monarchy to the liberty of the Republic. Thence the enthusiasm for the Girondins, men of the Constitution of 1791; thence also the hope which attached to their re-integration and their vengeance. All patriotism was struck, all virtue was fading, all liberty was dying with them.

The already wounded heart of Charlotte felt all these blows inflicted on her country turning into agony, despair, and courage, in one single heart. She saw France lost, she saw the victims, she thought she saw the tyrant. She swore to herself to avenge the one, punish the other, and serve all. She brooded several days over the undefined resolution of her soul without knowing what act her country required of her, and what knot of crime it was her duty to sever. She studied things, men, circumstances, so that her courage was not deceived, and her blood not shed in vain.

THE Girondins, whom the city of Caen had taken under its protection, were lodged at the Palace of the *ancienne Intendance*. The assemblies of the people were held there, where citizens, and even women, hastened to contemplate those first victims of anarchy, those last avengers of liberty. The names of Pétion, Buzol, Louvel, Barbaroux,—so long powerful,—spoke louder than their discourses to the imagination of the

Calvados. The vicissitudes of revolutions, which show as exiles and suppliants in a distant town of the Republic those orators who had overthrown the monarchy, raised the people of Paris, filled the tribune and nation with their voices, touched the spectators, and made them proud to avenge such illustrious guests. People were intoxicated with the accents of these men; they were appealed to; Pétion that king of Paris was pointed out, and Barbaroux, the hero of Marseille, whose youth and beauty served to augment his eloquence, his courage, and his misfortunes. The people left those assemblies crying, "To arms," and exciting their sons, husbands, brothers, to enrol themselves in the battalions. Charlotte Corday, surmounting the prejudices of her rank and the timidity of her sex and age, assisted several times with some friends at these *séances*. She attracted attention by her silent enthusiasm, which elevated her feminine beauty, and which betrayed itself by tears. She desired to have seen those whom she was resolved to save. The situation, the words, the faces of those first apostles of liberty, almost all young, were engraved on her soul, and gave something more impassioned to her devotion to their cause.

General Wimpfen, who had been summoned by the Convention to return towards Paris, replied that he would do so, but at the head of 60,000 men, not to obey a usurping power, but to re-establish in its integrity the national representation, and to avenge the depart-

ments. More than 6000 volunteers were already assembled in Caen. On Sunday, the 7th July, they were reviewed by the Girondin deputies and the authorities of Calvados with all the formalities likely to electrify their courage. This armed assembly, rising spontaneously to meet death and avenge liberty for the insults of anarchy, recalled the patriotic insurrection of 1792, which led to the frontiers all those who refused to live if there were no longer a country.

Charlotte Corday, stationed at a balcony, assisted at this enrolment and departure. The enthusiasm of these young citizens, leaving their homes to protect the land from the violation of the national representation, and brave both cannon and the guillotine, responded to hers. She felt it still too cold. She was indignant at the few that, during this review, were added to the regiments and the battalions of Wimpfen. There were, in fact, not more than 20 on that day.

This enthusiasm was, it is said, softened in her by the mysterious but pure affection with which she had inspired one of those young volunteers, who tore themselves from their families, their loves, probably for life. Charlotte Corday could not remain insensible to this hidden worship, but she immolated this attachment of pure gratitude to a more sublime worship.

This young man was named Franquelin. In silence he adored the fair republican. He entertained a correspondence with her, full of reserve and respect, to which she replied with the sad and tender reserve of a young girl who has nothing but misfortunes for her

dowry. She had given him her portrait, and allowed him to love at least her image. Monsieur de Franquelin, carried away by the general enthusiasm, and sure of winning a look of approbation while arming for liberty, had enrolled himself in the army of Caen. Charlotte could not help a feeling of weakness as, with pallid features, she watched the battalion march past at its departure. Tears filled her eyes. Pétion, who was passing the balcony and who knew Charlotte, astonished at this sign of weakness in her, said to her: "Would you be glad if they did not go?" The young girl blushed, but refrained from answering, and retired. Pétion had not understood her confusion. The future revealed it. Young Franquelin, after the act and execution of Charlotte, retired to a village in Normandy, death-stricken with recoil of the axe that had decapitated her whom he adored. There, alone with his mother, he languished a few months and then died, begging that the letters and portrait of Charlotte should be buried with him. Her image and secret repose in his tomb.

After the departure of the volunteers, Charlotte had but one thought, viz., to forestall their arrival in Paris, spare their generous lives, and render their patriotism useless, by delivering France from tyranny before them. This attachment, endured rather than felt, was one of the sorrows of her devotion, but not the cause of it.

The true cause was her patriotism. A presentiment

of terror already began to spread over France. The scaffold was standing in Paris. People talked of parading it throughout the republic. The power of the Mountain and of Marat, if triumphant, could only be maintained by the hand of the executioner. The monster, it is said, had already written lists of proscription, and counted the number of heads that were required to satiate his suspicions or his vengeance. 2500 victims were destined in Lyons, 3000 at Marseilles, 28,000 in Paris, 300,000 in Brittany and in Calvados. The name of Marat made one shudder like the name of death.

Against so much blood Charlotte wished to shed her own. The more she became detached from the ties of earth, the more agreeable would be the voluntary victim to the Liberty that she wished to appease.

Such was the secret disposition of her mind, but Charlotte wished to see before striking.

SHE could not be better enlightened as to the state of Paris, about things and men, than by applying to the Girondins, the most interested in the cause. She wanted to probe them without discovering her reasons. She respected them too much to reveal to them a project which they might have taken for a crime, or prevented as generous temerity. She had the constancy to conceal from her friends the thought that she would lose her life to save theirs. She presented herself at the Hotel de l'Intendance, where citizens who

wished to speak to them could approach the deputies. She saw Bazot, Pétion, Louvel. She had several interviews with Barbaroux. The interviews of a young girl, beautiful and enthusiastic, with the handsomest and the youngest of the Girondins, under colour of politics, might well give rise to calumny, or, at least, excite a smile of incredulity on many lips. It was thus at the first moment. Louvel, who has since written a hymn to the purity and glory of the young heroine, thought at first that it was one of those vulgar seductions of the senses of which he had accumulated pictures in his novel of "Faublas." Buzot, filled with another image, scarcely deigned to look on Charlotte. Pétion, crossing the common hall of the Intendance, where Charlotte was waiting for Barbaroux, railed gracefully at her assiduity, showing the contrast between her birth and her action. "Look now," said he, smiling, "the beautiful aristocrat comes to see the republicans." The young girl understood the smile and the insinuation, so wounding to her purity. She blushed,—then indignant at having blushed, and in a tone of serious but gentle reproach, said to him,—"Citizen Pétion, you judge one to-day without knowing me, some day you will know who I am."

At the audiences that she obtained with Barbaroux, and that she prolonged with the intention of instruction, during his discourses on the republicanism, the enthusiasm, and the projects of the Gironde, she took the humble role of solicitor; she asked the young

Marseillais for an introduction to one of his colleagues of the Convention, who would introduce her to the minister of the interior. She had, she told him, requests to make to the government in favour of Mademoiselle de Forbin, her childhood's friend. Mademoiselle de Forbin had been led to emigrate with her relatives, and was now living in indigence in Switzerland. Barbaroux gave her a letter to Lauze de Perret, one of the 73 deputies of the Girondin party who was forgotten in the first proscription.

This letter from Barbaroux, which was afterwards, for Lauze de Perret, a pass to the scaffold, did not contain one word that could be imputed to crime in the deputy who received it. Barbaroux confined himself to the recommendation of a young citizen of Caen, to the civilities and care of Lauze de Perret. He announced a work from their mutual friend, Salles, on the Constitution.

Armed with this letter and a passport that she had taken for Argentan a few days before, she went to thank Barbaroux and bid him farewell. The sound of her voice struck him with a presentiment which he could not then comprehend. "If we had known her intention," said he, later, "and if we had been capable of a crime by such a hand, it would not have been Marat whom we should have pointed out to her vengeance."

The gaiety that Charlotte had constantly mixed with the serious in her patriotic conversations, had flown from her brow as she left, for the last time, the home of the Girondins. The last struggle was taking

place in her between the thought and its execution. She concealed this internal struggle with careful and minute dissimulation. The gravity of her face, and tears ill-concealed from her friends, revealed the voluntary agony of her suicide. Interrogated by her aunt, "I weep," replied she, "over the misfortunes of my country, over those of my relatives and yours: so long as Marat lives, no one will be sure of their life for even a day."

Madame de Bretteville remembered afterwards, that when she went into Charlotte's room to wake her, she found on her bed an old Bible open at the book of Judith, and that she read the following verse. "Judith went out of the city adorned with a marvellous beauty, which the Lord had given her for the deliverance of Israel."

The same day Charlotte, having gone out to make some preparations for her departure, saw in the street some tradesmen sitting before their doors playing at cards. "You play," said she, with an accent of bitter irony, "and the country is dying!"

Her manners and words betrayed the impatience and hurry of departure. She left, indeed, on the 8th July for Argentan. There she bade her father and sister adieu. She told them that she was going to leave for England shortly, where friends, who had emigrated, had prepared a home for her that she could never hope to obtain in France, and that she had come for a paternal blessing before this long separation.

Her father approved of her leaving the country.

THE sadness and nakedness of her paternal home, the premature grave of her mother, the exile of her brothers, the discouragement of all hopes, the rending of all the ties of childhood, confirmed the resolution of the young girl, instead of weakening it. She left behind her no felicity to regret, no life to compromise, no spoil to give up.

In embracing her father and sister, she wept more over the past than the future. She returned to Caen the same day. She deceived the tenderness of her aunt by the same *ruse* as that she had employed to deceive her father. This pretence served to cover the weakness she displayed in bidding her farewell, and the interior arrangements that she had to make for her departure, which she had fixed for the next day, the 9th July, by the diligence to Paris.

Charlotte filled up her last hours in gratitude, forethought, and tenderness for that aunt, to whom she owed so long and happy a hospitality. She provided through one of her friends for the future of the old servant who had served her in childhood. She ordered, and paid for in advance, to some needlewomen in Caen, several little presents of dresses and embroideries, intended to be worn after her departure as souvenirs by some young companions of her youth. She distributed her favourite books among her friends; and only retained one volume of Plutarch, as though she would not separate herself, in the crisis of her life, from the society of those great men, with whom she had lived, and with whom she was resolved to die.

Early on the 9th July she took her little parcel of necessary clothing under her arm, kissed her aunt, telling her she was going to sketch some haymakers in the neighbouring prairie. A drawing-book in her hand, she went out, never to return.

At the foot of the stairs she met the child of a poor workman named Robert, who lodged in the same house overlooking the street. The child was accustomed to play in the courtyard, and she used to give him pictures. "Here, Robert," said she, as she gave him the drawing-book, no longer useful to give her countenance, "this is for you, be very good, kiss me, you will never see me again." And as she kissed the child, she left a tear upon his cheek. It was the last tear on the threshold of her youth. She had nothing more to give but her blood.

Her departure, the reasons for which no one knew, was revealed to her neighbours of St John's Street, by a circumstance which shows the calm serenity of her soul to the end of her resolution.

Opposite the house of Madame de Bretteville, on the other side of the street, lived a respectable family named Laconture. The son, passionately fond of music, devoted several hours of the morning to his instrument. His windows, open in summer, allowed the notes to escape, and penetrate the neighbouring houses. Charlotte, the better to hear, would half open her blinds about the time when the music was heard, and resting her arms upon the stone sill of the window, her head being, at times, half hidden in the curtains, would listen to and dream over the sounds. The young

musician, encouraged by this apparition of the attentive young girl, never failed to sit down to his piano daily, at the same hour. Charlotte never allowed a day to pass without opening the Venetian shutters. A taste for the same art seemed to have established a mute intelligence between these two souls, who only knew each other through these sounds.

The day before Charlotte, already firm in her resolution, prepared to go, to accomplish it and die, the piano was heard at the usual time. Enticed, no doubt, from the steadfastness of her thoughts by the attraction of the sounds of the art she loved, Charlotte opened her blinds, and appeared to listen to the notes, as calmly, but more reflectively than usual. Nevertheless she closed her window with unusual precipitation, before the musician had finished, as though she wished to tear herself from a painful adieu to the last pleasure that captivated her.

The following day, the young neighbour, seating himself as usual before his instrument, looked into the court of the Grand Manoir opposite, to see if the first preludes would open the blinds of the window of Madame de Bretteville's niece. But the window was never opened more! The instrument still sounded, but the soul of the young girl was listening to nothing now but the stormy nature of her thoughts, the summons of death, and the commendations of posterity.

The freedom and assurance of her conversation in the diligence did not inspire her travelling companions

with any other sentiment than that of admiration, benevolence, and that natural curiosity which one feels to know the name and fate of a young girl brilliant with youth and beauty. She never ceased playing all the first day with a little girl whom accident had seated by her side in the vehicle. It may have been that her love for children had got the better of her preoccupation; or was it that she had already disposed of her sorrows, and determined to enjoy her last hours with innocence and life?

The other travellers were fanatical Mountaineers, who dreaded the suspicion of federalism in Paris; and whilst they cursed the Girondins, spoke in terms of adoration of Marat. Dazzled by the graces of the young girl, they tried to draw from her her name and her address in Paris. Her loneliness at this age encouraged familiarities which she repressed by the modesty of her manner, the evasive brevity of her replies, and from which, at length, she escaped altogether by feigning sleep. A young man more reserved than the rest, seduced by so much modesty and by her charms, declared a respectful admiration for her. He begged her to allow him to ask her parents to give him her hand. She made light of this sudden love, and promised him that she would let him know hereafter both her name and her disposition towards him. She enchanted her fellow-travellers to the end of the journey, by her charming apparition, from which all regretted to be separated.

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She entered Paris on Thursday the 11th July, at noon. She then went to a hotel that had been named to her in Caen, in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, No. 17, Hotel de la Providence. She went to bed at five o'clock in the evening, and slept soundly till the next day. Without confidant or witness, during these long hours of solitude and agitation in a public hotel, in the noise of the capital, of which the immensity and tumult destroy one's ideas and trouble one's senses, none can say what passed in her soul, when she awoke and found herself in the presence of a revolution *that she was determined to accomplish.* Who can measure the power of her thought, against the resistance of nature? Thought gained the victory.

She rose, dressed herself in a simple but genteel gown, and went to Lauze de Perret. The friend of Barbaroux was at the Convention. His daughters, in the absence of their father, received from the young stranger the letter of introduction. Lauze de Perret would not return till the evening. Charlotte returned to her hotel, and spent the day in her room reading, reflecting, praying. At six o'clock she returned to Lauze de Perret. The deputy was at supper with his family and friends. He rose and received her in his drawing-room without witness. Charlotte explained to him what service she wished him to render her, and asked him to conduct her to the minister of the Interior, Garat, to influence by his presence and his credit the claims which she had to proffer. This request

was, in the mind of Mademoiselle Corday, but a pretext to obtain speech with one of the Girondins, to whose cause she came to sacrifice herself, and to draw from her interview with him all the information and indications requisite to strengthen her steps and her hand.

Lauze de Perret, pressed for time and recalled by his guests, told her that he could not take her to Garat on that day, but that he would call for her the following morning to accompany her to the bureaux. She left him her name and address, and made a few steps to withdraw; but, vanquished by the interest that the honest face of the good man and the childhood of his daughters inspired her with, she said to him in a voice full of mystery and friendship, "Permit me one word of advice, citizen, Quit the Convention, you can do no more good there; go to Caen, join your colleagues and your brethren." "My post is in Paris," said he. "I shall not leave it." "You are wrong," replied Charlotte with significant earnestness almost amounting to supplicating. "Believe me," added she in a low and rapid tone of voice, "fly, fly, before to-morrow night." And she went out without awaiting an answer.

Those words, of which the sense was only known to the stranger, were interpreted by Lauze de Perret as a simple allusion to the urgency of the perils that threatened every man of his opinions in Paris. He resumed his seat among his friends. He told them

that the young girl whom he had just received had struck him strangely by her attitude and her words, so suggestive of reserve and circumspection. During that evening, a decree was passed at the Convention, ordering seals to be affixed to the goods of all the deputies suspected of attachment to the 22. Lauze de Perret was of the number. He went, nevertheless, the next morning, on the 12th, very early to fetch Charlotte from her lodging, to conduct her to Garat, who, however, declined to receive them. The minister could not give them audience till eight in the evening. This seemed to discourage Lauze de Perret. He represented to the young girl, that his position of a suspected person, and the measures taken against him that night, might henceforth render his patronage more hurtful than useful to his clients; besides which, she had not obtained a power of attorney from Mademoiselle de Forbin, to act in her name, without which she could effect nothing.

The young stranger did not insist, like a person who has no longer need of a pretence with which to cover her actions, and who is content with the first excuse to abandon her intention. Lauze de Perret left her at the door of the Hotel de la Providence. She pretended to go in, but came out directly, and inquired her way, from street to street, till she reached the Palais Royal.

She entered the garden, not like a stranger who wishes to satisfy her curiosity by the contemplation of the monuments and public gardens, but like a traveller who has but one object in a city, and who will not lose

a step or an hour. She sought out a cutler's shop under the galleries, went in, and chose a dagger with an ebony handle, for which she paid three francs. She hid it beneath her *fichu*, and slowly returned to the garden. She rested for a moment on one of the stone benches, and leaned against the arcade. There, although plunged in the deepest thought, she allowed herself to be amused by the children that were playing about; some of them even came and leaned on her lap. She had a last woman's smile for those young faces and those games. Her indecision oppressed her, —not the act itself for which she was armed, but regarding the manner in which it should be done. She wanted to make of this murder a solemn immolation that should strike terror into the souls of the imitators of the tyrant. Her first thought was to accost Marat, and sacrifice him in the Champ-de-Mars, during the grand ceremony of the federation, which was to take place on the 14th July, in commemoration of re-conquered liberty. The adjournment of this solemnity until the triumph of the republic over the Vendeans and the insurgents, took from her the theatre and the victim. Her second thought was to strike Marat at the head of the Mountain, in the midst of the Convention, beneath the gaze of his worshippers and accomplices. Her hope was in this case that she should be instantly immolated, and perhaps torn to pieces by the fury of the mob, without leaving any trace or other memory than two corpses and tyranny overthrown in her blood. To bury her name in forgetfulness and only seek her reward in the act itself, asking

for her shame, or her renown, in her conscience, of God, and of the good she should accomplish, such indeed was the only ambition of her heart. She did not want shame, for her family's sake; renown she did not wish for, for her own sake. Glory seemed to her a human reward unworthy of the disinterestedness of her action, or only fit to lower her virtue.

But the interviews she had had with Lauze de Perret, since her arrival in Paris, and with *the proprietors of the hotel,* had informed her that Marat no longer attended the Convention. She must then seek her victim elsewhere, and to accost him, she must deceive him.

She resolved to do so. This dissimulation, that shocked the natural loyalty of her mind, that changed the dagger into a trap, courage into a *ruse,* immolation into an assassination, was the first remorse of her conscience, and the first part of her punishment. One can distinguish a criminal action from an heroic one, even before it is accomplished, by the means that must be used to accomplish it. Crime must always lie; virtue, never. It is that the one is a lie, the other truth in action. The one needs darkness, the other will only have light. Charlotte determined to deceive him. It cost her more than to strike. She owns this herself. Her conscience is just before posterity.

She returned to her room, wrote a note to Marat, which she left at the door of "the Friend of the People."

"I have arrived from Caen," said she. "Your love for the country makes me presume that you will hear with pleasure the unhappy events of this part of the republic. I shall present myself at your house about one o'clock; have the goodness to receive me and grant me a moment's interview. I will put you in a way to render a great service to France."

Charlotte, reckoning on the effect of this note, was at Marat's door at the time she had named; but she could not gain access to him. She then left with the portress a second note, more pressing, more insidious than the first. She made a call not only on the patriotism, but on the pity of the "Friend of the people," and laid a trap for him in the generosity which she supposed him to have. "I wrote to you this morning, Marat," said she, "have you received my letter? I cannot believe it, since I am refused admission at your door. I hope that to-morrow you will grant me an interview. I repeat, I come from Caen; I can reveal to you the most important secrets for the salvation of the republic. Besides, I am persecuted for the cause of liberty. I am unhappy. It is sufficient that I am so to have a claim to your patriotism."

Without awaiting an answer, Charlotte left her room at seven o'clock in the evening, dressed with more care than usual, to seduce by a more decent appearance the eyes of those who watched over Marat. Her white dress was covered on the shoulders by a

silk *fichu*, which, veiling her chest, was folded under the breast at the waist, and was tied behind her. Her hair was enclosed in a Norman coiffe, of which the falling lace touched her cheeks. A broad green ribbon fastened the coiffe on her temples. Her hair, escaped from it at the back, allowed a few curls to fall upon her neck. No paleness, no wandering look, no emotion of voice, revealed that she carried death. It was under such seductive attractions that she again knocked at Marat's door.

MARAT inhabited the first floor of a dilapidated house in the Rue des Cordeliers, now known as the Rue de l'Ecole-de-Medecine, No. 18. His lodgings consisted of an ante-room and study looking into a narrow court, of a little room by the side used as a bath-room, bed-room, and drawing-room, looking into the street. This lodging was almost empty. The numerous works by Marat, piled upon the floor; public papers and documents, still damp with ink, scattered about on chairs and tables; printers' boys continually running in and out; women employed in folding and directing pamphlets and newspapers; the worn staircase and dirty doorstep,—all attested the movements and disorder of a man of business, and the constant rushing to and fro of citizens to the house of a publisher and a Coryphée of the people.

This house exhibited, so to speak, the pride of his indigence. It seemed as though the master, all-powerful over the nation, would say to his visitors,

at the appearance of his poverty and labour, "Look on the friend and model of the people! he has neither discarded their lodging, their customs, nor their dress."

This poverty, although affected, was real. The home of Marat was that of an humble artisan. The woman who managed the house was formerly known as Catherine Evrard; she was now known as Albertine Marat, since the Friend of the People had given her his name when he took her to wife, "*one fine day in the face of the sun,*" after the example of Jean Jacques Rousseau. An only servant assisted this woman in the care of the house. A commissionnaire, named Laurent Basse, went on errands and did the outdoor work. When he had nothing else to do, this man was busy in the ante-room forwarding the papers and advertisements for the Friend of the People.

The devouring activity of the writer had not slackened by the disease that undermined him. The inflammation of his blood seemed to light up his mind. At one moment from his bed, at another from his bath, he never ceased to inveigh against and apostrophize his enemies, to incite the Convention and the Cordeliers. Offended by the silence of the assembly at the reception of his messages, he had just written another letter, in which he threatened the Convention to have himself carried dying to the tribune to shame the representatives for their lukewarmness, and dictate to them the necessary murders. He gave no rest to others nor to himself. Full of a presentiment of death, he seemed to fear that the supreme hour would be too rapid to allow him time to immolate a sufficient num-

ber of the guilty. More anxious to kill than to live himself, he hastened to send before him as many victims as possible, as so many hostages given, by the sword, to the complete revolution that he wished to leave without enemies behind him.

The terror which went out from the house of Marat returned to it under another form, the continual dread of assassination. His companions ever thought they saw as many daggers raised against him, as he raised against the lives of 300,000 citizens. The entrance to his house was interdicted as that to the palace of tyranny. None but sure friends were admitted to see him, or denunciators recommended beforehand, and subjected to severe inspection and interrogation. Love, suspicion, and fanaticism watched over his days.

Charlotte knew nothing of these obstacles, although she suspected them. She left the carriage on the opposite side of the street, facing the house of Marat. The day was closing, more particularly in this neighbourhood, darkened by high houses and narrow streets. The porteress would not at first allow the young stranger to come into the court. She nevertheless insisted, and had already got a few steps up the staircase, summoned by their porteress to return, but in vain. At this noise the concubine of Marat opened the door, and refused her entrance to the room. The altercation between the women, one of whom was imploring to speak to the Friend of the People,

the other obstinately preventing her, reached the ears of Marat. He comprehended by these broken explanations that the visitor was the stranger from whom he had received two letters that day. In an imperative and loud voice he ordered that she should be admitted.

Whether from suspicion or jealousy, Albertine obeyed with reluctance and grumbling. She introduced the young girl into the little room where Marat was, and retired, leaving, as she went out, the passage door ajar, to be able to hear the least movement or word of the invalid.

This room was but feebly lighted. Marat was in his bath. In this forced repose of the body, he did not allow his mind to rest. A rough plank, resting on the bath, was covered with papers, open letters, and pages commenced. He held in his right hand the pen that the arrival of the stranger had suspended over the page. This sheet of paper was a letter to the Convention to ask for the sentence and proscription of the last Bourbons tolerated in France. By the side of the bath, on a heavy billet of oak, like a log placed end-ways, stood a leaden inkstand of the coarsest make: impure sources from whence had issued, during three years, so many acts of madness, so many denunciations, so much blood. Marat, covered in his bath with a dirty sheet stained with ink, had nothing out of the water but his head and shoulders, the upper part of his bust, and his right arm. There was nothing in this man to soften the eye of a woman, or make her hesitate to strike the blow. His greasy

hair tied round with a dirty handkerchief, his receding forehead, insolent eyes, high cheek-bones, large grinning mouth, hairy chest, skinny arms, and livid skin: such was Marat.

CHARLOTTE avoided looking at him for fear of betraying the horror of her soul at his aspect. Standing, her eyes cast down, her hands dropped to her side, near the bath, she waits until Marat shall interrogate her on the situation of Normandy. She replies briefly, giving her answers the sense and colour most fit to flatter the supposed dispositions of the demagogue. He asks her the names of the deputies who are sheltered in Caen, she dictates their names, he takes notes, and when he has done he exclaims in the accents of a man sure of his vengeance, "That's well! before eight days they shall all go to the guillotine!"

At these words, as if the soul of Charlotte had waited for a last villany to give herself the will to strike the blow, she draws the knife from her bosom, and plunges it, with supernatural force, to the hilt into the heart of Marat. Charlotte withdraws the knife with the same movement from the body of the victim, and lets it drop at her feet. "To me! my dear! to me!" shrieked Marat, and expired under the blow.

At the cry of distress from the victim, Albertine, the servant, and Laurent Basse rush into the room. They receive the dying head of Marat. Charlotte, immovable and petrified at the sight of her crime,

was standing behind the curtain at the window. The transparent muslin showed her shadow against the last rays of day. The commissionaire Laurent takes up a chair, and striking an ill-aimed blow at her head, fells her to the ground. The concubine of Marat stamps upon her, trembling with fury. At the tumult of the scene, at the cries of the two women, the inhabitants of the next houses rush in, the neighbours and passers-by stop in the street, run up the stairs, and soon the rooms are full, the court, and then all the neighbourhood, demanding, with vociferations of rage, that the assassin be thrown to them, to avenge on her still living body the death of the idol of the people. The soldiers of the neighbouring guard-rooms run in. Order is maintained in the midst of the tumult. The surgeons arriving, try to stop the wound. The water reddened, gives to this sanguinary man the appearance of dying in a bath of blood. They only carry a corpse to his bed.

CHARLOTTE rose from the ground unassisted. Two soldiers held her hands crossed one over the other as if hand-cuffed, until some rope could be got to tie them. The hedge of bayonets that surrounded her was barely sufficient to save her from the mob that crowded round with a view to tear her to pieces. The gestures, uplifted fists, staves, and swords, threatened her with a thousand deaths. The concubine of Marat, escaping from the women that tried to console her, threw herself at intervals on Charlotte, then fell back

fainting and in tears. A fanatic Cordelier named Langlois, a barber of the Rue Dauphine, had picked up the blood-stained knife. He there and then pronounced a funeral discourse over the body of the victim. He interlarded his lamentations and praises with threatening gestures, by which he seemed to strike the iron into the heart of the assassin. Charlotte, who had accepted beforehand all these deaths, contemplated, with a fixed and petrified look, these movements, gestures, and hands, these arms so closely aimed against her. Nothing moved her but the heart-rending cries of the concubine of Marat. Her physiognomy seemed to express, at the sight of that woman, astonishment that such a man could be loved, and the regret that she should have had to pierce two hearts to reach one. Except the expression of pity that the reproaches of Albertine caused her countenance at times to assume, there was no alteration in her features nor her colour. Only, at the invectives of the orator and the groans of the people at the loss of its idol, one could see a smile of bitter contempt play around her lips. "Poor folks," said she once, "you wish for my death, and you owe me an altar for having delivered you from a monster." "Throw me to these maniacs," said she at another time to the soldiers that protected her; "since they regret him they are worthy to be my executioners."

This smile, in defiance as it were of the fanaticism of the multitude, raised the most furious imprecations and threatening gestures. The commissary of the section of the Theatre-Français, Guillard, entered

escorted by a reinforcement of bayonets. He made out the *procès verbal* of the murder, and Charlotte was led into Marat's drawing-room to be interrogated. He wrote her answers: she gave them calmly, lucidly, reflectedly, in a firm, sonorous voice, in which one felt the accent of a proud satisfaction for the act she had committed. She dictated her confessions as praises. The administrators of the police department assisted at this interrogatory. They had sent to inform the council of the commune, the comité of public safety, and the comité of general security. The report of the death of the Friend of the people had spread with the rapidity of an electric commotion, by men who ran frantically from street to street. All Paris appeared stupified at this attempt. It seemed that the republic had trembled, or that unknown events must happen from the murder of Marat.

At this news the deputies, Maure, Chabot, Drouet, Legendre, members of the comité of government, rushed from the hall of the Convention, and ran to the scene of crime. They found the crowd thickening, and Charlotte answering the first interrogatories. They were confounded and mute at the sight of so much youth and beauty in her countenance, so much calm and resolution in her words. Crime had never before appeared under similar features to the minds of men.

The *procès verbal* terminated, and the first answers of Charlotte recorded, the deputies, Chabot, Drouet,

Legendre, and Maure ordered her to be taken to the Abbaye, the nearest prison to Marat's house. They called the same public carriage in which she had come. The crowd filled the Rue des Cordeliers; its low murmur, interrupted by vociferations and the excesses of rage, announced its vengeance, and rendered her removal difficult. The detachments of fusiliers successively arrived, the scarf of the commissaries, and respect for members of the Convention, drove back the multitude and restrained them a little. The procession made its way slowly. At the moment when Charlotte, her hands bound with cords, and assisted by the hands of the two national guards who held her arms, stepped from the door of the house to the carriage, the people crowded round the wheels with such howls and threats, that she fancied she could feel them tearing her limbs asunder, and she fainted.

When she came to herself, she was annoyed to find that she still breathed. It was this death that she had pictured to herself. Nature had thrown the veil of insensibility over her tortures. She regretted not to have disappeared thus in the tempest she had raised, and to have given her body to the earth, before another death could reach her.

And yet she warmly thanked those who had protected her from the mutilations of the mob.

Chabot, Drouet, and Legendre followed her to the Abbaye, and subjected her to another inquiry. Some other members of the comité, among others Harmand

(de la Meuse), attracted by curiosity, had come in with their colleagues, and assisted in the interrogatory, which was often interrupted by pauses and conversations. Legendre, proud of his revolutionary importance, and jealous of being thought worthy of patriotic martyrdom, believed, or pretended to believe, that he recognized in Charlotte a young girl who had come to him the day before in the garb of a nun, whom he had repulsed. "Citizen Legendre makes a mistake," said Charlotte, with a smile that disconcerted the pride of the deputy, "I never saw him: I did not esteem the life or death of such a man of sufficient importance to the salvation of the republic."

She was searched, but, at this time, they found in her pockets only the key of her trunk, her silver thimble, a ball of thread, instruments of needlework—so recently side by side with the dagger of Brutus—200 francs in *assignats* and in cash, a gold watch made by a watchmaker of Caen, and her passport. Under her *fichu* she still carried the sheath of the knife with which she had stabbed Marat.

"Do you recognize this knife?" asked one.

"Yes."

"What made you commit this crime?"

"I saw," replied she, "civil war ready to rend France; persuaded that Marat was the principal cause of the perils and calamities of the country, I made the sacrifice of my life against his, to save the country."

"Name the persons who advised you to commit this horrible deed, which you could not have conceived of yourself."

"No person knew of my design. I deceived my aunt with whom I lived, as to the object of my journey. Few persons frequented the house of my relative, and no one ever even suspected my thought."

"Did you not leave the town of Caen with the determination to assassinate Marat?"

"I only left there for that purpose."

"Where did you procure the weapon?" "What persons have you seen in Paris?" "What have you done since Thursday, when you arrived?" To these questions she recorded, with literal sincerity, all the circumstances already known of her residence in Paris, and of her actions.

"Did you not try to escape after the murder?"

"I should have fled by the door if no one had opposed it."

"Are you a girl, and have you never loved a man?"

"Never."

These replies, precise, proud, disdainful by turns, given in a voice, the clear ring of which recalled childhood, while it announced matured reflection, made her interrogators reflect more than once on the power of a fanaticism that could borrow and strengthen so firm a hand. They hoped to discover the instigator beneath that candour and beauty. They only found the inspiration of an intrepid heart.

The interrogatory ended, Chabot, annoyed at the result, eyed the hair, face, form, all the person of the

young girl bound before him. He fancied he saw a folded paper pinned to the bosom of her dress; he put out his hand to take it. Charlotte had forgotten the paper that Chabot had seen, which contained an address to Frenchmen, composed by her, to invite the citizens to punish the tyrants, and to concord. She thought she saw in the motion of Chabot an outrage to her purity. Disarmed of both hands by her cords, she could not oppose them to insult. The horror and indignation that she felt, caused her to make so sudden, convulsive, and violent a backward movement, that the string of her dress broke, and the dress itself falling open, left her chest uncovered. Confused, she bent herself almost double to hide from her judges, but it was too late, her chastity had to blush before the eyes of men.

Patriotism did not render these men cynical nor insensible. They seemed to suffer as much as Charlotte Corday at her wounded modesty. She implored them to let her have her hands unbound to fasten her dress. One of them untied the cords. Respect for her innocence closed the eyes of these men. Her hands unbound, she turned towards the wall and replaced her *fichu*. They profited by the moment when her hands were free to make her sign her answers. The cords had left their mark in dark blue furrows on her arms. When they were going to retie the cords she begged her gaolers to allow her to pull down her sleeves and put on her gloves under them, to spare her a useless torture before the last agony. The accent and gesture of the poor girl were such, as she

showed her wounded hands, that Harmand could not restrain his tears, and he went out to conceal them.

Charlotte Corday was consigned to a dungeon, guarded at sight, even during the night, by two gens-d'armes. She vainly exclaimed against this profanation of her sex. The comité of public security hurried her judgment and execution. She could hear from her wretched bed the public criers, hawking the tale of the murder about the streets, and the howling crowd wishing a thousand deaths to the assassin. Charlotte did not take this voice of the people for the sentence of posterity.

Through the horror that she inspired, she foresaw an apotheosis. Thinking thus, she wrote to the comité of the general security. "Since I have a few moments to live, may I hope, citizens, that you will have my portrait painted? I should like to leave this souvenir of myself to my friends. Besides, like as the likenesses of good citizens are esteemed, so curiosity sometimes makes one seek those of great criminals to perpetuate the horror of their crime. If you grant my request, I beg you will send me a miniature painter to-morrow. I hear continually the cries in the street of the arrest of Fauchet, my accomplice. I never saw him but from my window two years ago. I neither like nor esteem him. He is the last man to whom I should have voluntarily confided my project. If this declaration can be of use to him, I hereby certify the truth of it."

The president of the revolutionary tribunal,

Montané, came the next day, the 16th, to interrogate the accused. Touched by such beauty and youth, and convinced of the sincerity of a fanaticism which almost exculpated the assassin in the sight of human justice, he tried to save her life. He directed the questions, and tacitly insinuated the replies so as to lead her judges to the conclusion that she was more demented than criminal. Charlotte obstinately evaded this merciful intention of the president. She vindicated her act as a glory. She was carried to the Conciergerie. Madame Richard, the wife of the porter of that prison, received her with the compassion which was called forth by the coming union between youth and the scaffold.

Thanks to the indulgence of her gaolers, Charlotte obtained ink, paper, and solitude. She profited by it to write a letter to Barbaroux. This letter related all the circumstances of her stay in Paris, in a style in which patriotism, death, and joyousness were mingled like the bitters and the sweets in the last cup at a farewell banquet.

After describing the almost facetious details of her journey in the company of mountaineers, and the young fellow-traveller falling in love with her,—"I was not aware," continued she, "that the comité of public security had interrogated the passengers. I maintained at first that I did not know them, to save them the trouble of explaining. I followed in that my oracle, Ranal, who says, one owes not one truth to tyrants.

"It is from the female who travelled with me that they came to know that I was acquainted with you,

and that I had seen de Perret. You know well with how firm a soul de Perret is endowed. He told them the exact truth. There is nothing against him, but his firmness is a crime. I regretted when too late that I spoke to him. I wished to repair my error by imploring him to fly and rejoin you. He is too resolute to allow himself to be influenced. Would you believe it? Fauchet is imprisoned as my accomplice, he, who was ignorant of my existence! But they are not best pleased to have only a woman of no consequence to offer to the manes of this great man. Pardon! O men! this name of Marat dishonours your species: he was a ferocious beast that would have devoured France by the fire of civil war. Thank Heaven he was not born a Frenchman. . . . . At my first interrogatory, Chabot looked like a madman. Legendre chose to say he had seen me in the morning at his house; I who never dreamt of the man. I do not think him capable of being a tyrant to his country, and I do not pretend to punish all. I believe they have printed the last words of Marat. I much doubt if he uttered any. But these are the last he said to me. After receiving the names of you all, and those of the administrators of the department of Calvados, who are at Eareux, he said to me, to console me, 'that in a few days he would have them all guillotined in Paris,' those last words decided his fate. I own what quite decided me was the courage with which our volunteers enrolled themselves, on Sunday, the 7th of July. You remember that I promised to make Pétion regret the suspicion that he manifested on my sentiments. I

considered that so many brave people marching to have the head of one man, whom they would have missed, or have dragged with him in his downfall many good citizens, that he was not worthy of so much honour, and that a woman's hand was enough. I own that I used perfidious trickery to induce him to receive me. I reckoned, when I started, on sacrificing him at the head of the mountain, but he no longer went to the Convention. People are such good citizens in Paris that they cannot conceive how a useless woman, whose longest life is good for nothing, can, in cold blood, sacrifice herself for her country! As I really was in cold blood when I came out of Marat's house to be conducted to the Abbaye, I suffered from the cries of a few women: but he who would save his country does not calculate the cost. May peace be at once established,—that is what I desire. I have enjoyed delightful peace these two days past: the happiness of my country makes mine. There is no kind of devotion from which one does not draw more enjoyment than it costs to reconcile oneself to it. A lively imagination and a sensitive heart promise a stormy life. I beg of those that may regret me to consider this and rejoice.

"Among the moderns, few patriots know how to immolate themselves for their country. Almost all is egotism. What a sad people to form a republic! . . ."

This letter was interrupted at these words by the removal of the captive to the Conciergerie; she con-

tinued it in her new prison in these words:—"I continue. Yesterday I had the idea of giving my portrait to the department of Calvados. The comité of public safety has not replied, and now it is too late! I must have a counsellor; it is the rule. I have taken mine from the mountain. I think of asking either Robespierre or Chabot . . . . To-morrow at eight I am to be judged; probably, at noon I shall have lived. I do not know how my last moments will be spent; it is the end that crowns the work. I do not need to affect insensibility, for up to the present moment I have not the least fear of death. I never esteemed life other than by the usefulness to which it might be put. Marat will not go to the Pantheon. He, nevertheless, well deserved it . . . . Remember the affairs of Mademoiselle de Forbin. Enclosed is her address in Switzerland; tell her that I love her with my whole heart. I shall now write to my father; I shall say nothing to my other friends. I only ask of them a prompt forgetfulness; their affliction would dishonour my memory. Tell General Wimpfen that I think I have helped him to gain more than one battle by facilitating peace. Adieu, citizen. The prisoners in the Conciergerie, instead of insulting me like the people in the streets, seem to pity me. Misfortune makes one sympathizing; it is my last reflection."

The letter to her father, written the last, was short, and of tender accent, as though nature was softened, instead of smiling, as with Barbaroux. "Pardon me

for having disposed of my existence without your permission," said she. "I have avenged many innocent victims, prevented many disasters. The people some day disabused will rejoice at being delivered from a tyrant. If I persuaded you that I was going to England, it was that I hoped to remain unknown. I have since recognized the impossibility. I hope you will not be annoyed; in any case you have defenders in Caen. I have engaged Gustave Doulcet de Pontécoulant to defend me. Such an act admits of no defence. It is only for the form. Adieu, my dear papa. I beg of you to forget me, or rather to rejoice over my fate. The cause is so good. I kiss my sister, whom I love with my whole heart.

"Do not forget this line of Corneille:

"'The crime makes the shame, not the scaffold!'

"It is to-morrow at eight o'clock that I am to be judged . . . ."

That allusion to a verse of her grandfather, by recalling to her father the pride of his name and the heroism of blood, seemed to place her action under the guardianship of the genius of her family. She defended beforehand the weakness or the reproach of a father's heart, by showing him the painter of Roman sentiments applauding her devotion beforehand.

The following day, at eight o'clock in the morning, the gens-d'armes came to fetch and conduct her to the revolutionary tribunal. The hall was situated above

the vaults of the Conciergerie. A dark staircase, narrow, funereal, creeping up between the hollow walls of the basement of the palace of justice, conducted the accused to the tribunal, and brought them back, condemned, to their cells. Before going up she arranged her hair and her dress, to appear with decency in the presence of death; then she said, smiling, "Monsieur Richard, be kind enough to have my breakfast prepared by my return from up there; my judges are probably in a hurry. I wish to take my last repast with you and Madame Richard."

The hour of the judgment of Charlotte Corday was known all over Paris the day before. Curiosity, horror, interest, and pity had drawn an immense crowd within the enclosure of the tribunal and the halls that precede it. When the accused approached a low murmur arose, like a malediction on her name, from the midst of the multitude. But she had scarcely made her way through the crowd and shone in her supernatural beauty before every eye, than this murmur of rage changed to one of trembling interest and admiration. Every face changed from horror to tenderness; her features, elevated by the solemnity of the moment, tinged with emotion, troubled with the confusion of a young girl beneath so many eyes. Strengthened and ennobled by the greatness of a crime that she carried in her heart and on her forehead as a virtue, pride and modesty, united and mingled in her attitude, gave to her figure a charm that troubled as with fear every soul present. Her judges even seemed the accused before her. People

fancied they saw divine justice, or an ancient Nemesis substituting conscience for law, and coming to ask from human justice, not her absolution, but her recognition, and to tremble.

When, seated on the bench of the accused, she was asked if she had any one to defend her. She replied that she had charged a friend to render her that service, but not seeing him there, she supposed he had wanted courage. The president then indicated young Chauveau-Legarde, since illustrious for his defence of the Queen, and already known by his eloquence and his courage in times when advocate and accused were apt to share the same fate. This choice of the president indicated a wish to save her. Chauveau-Legarde came and placed himself at the bar. Charlotte looked at him uneasily and inquisitively, as if she feared that to save her life her defender might abandon somewhat of his honour.

The widow of Marat gave her evidence in tears. Charlotte, moved by the sight of the agony of this woman, cut short her deposition, by exclaiming, "Yes, yes, it was I who killed him." Then she related how the premeditation of the act was conceived three months before, her intention to strike the tyrant in the midst of the Convention, the trickery she had used to approach him. "I own," said she, humbly, "that such means were unworthy of me; but I was obliged to pretend that I esteemed the man to gain access to him." "Who inspired you with such hatred towards

Marat?" she was asked. "I did not need the hatred of others," replied she, "I had enough of my own; besides, one never executes properly a project that one has not conceived oneself." "What did you hate in him?" "His crimes!" "By causing his death, what did you hope to do?" "Give peace to my country." "Do you then think that you have assassinated all the Marats?" "That one dead, the others will tremble, perhaps." They then showed her the knife for her to recognize it. She pushed it from her with a gesture of disgust. "Yes, I recognize it," said she. The crime grown cold, horrified her in the presence of the instrument that had consummated it. "What persons did you visit at Caen?" "Very few persons: I used to see Larne, municipal officer, and the curé of St Jean." "Was it to an unsworn or to a sworn priest that you went to confession?" "I neither went to one nor the other." "Since when had you formed this project?" "Since the 31st of May, when the deputies of the people were arrested here. I killed one man to save a hundred thousand. I was a republican long before the Revolution."

Fauchet was confronted with her. "I only know Fauchet by sight," said she with disdain. "I look upon him as a man without conduct or principles, and I despise him."

The accuser reproached her with striking the blow downwards, so that it should be more sure, telling her that, no doubt, she must be well practised in crime. At this supposition, which upset all her ideas, by assimilating her with murderers by profession, she ex-

claimed, in a voice of shame, "Oh! the monster, he takes me for an assassin."

Fonquier Tinville resumed the debates, and condemned her to death. Her defender rose.

"The accused," said he, "confesses the crime; she owns that she long premeditated it; she confesses the most crushing circumstances. Citizens, this is the sum of her defence: This imperturbable calm and complete self-abnegation, which reveals no remorse in the presence of death; this calm and self-abnegation, sublime under its aspect, are not in nature, they cannot be explained other than by the excitement of political fanaticism, which has placed the dagger in her hand. It is for you to judge what weight such unalterable fanaticism should have in the scale of justice, I appeal to your consciences."

The jury sentenced her unanimously to the pain of death. She heard the sentence without turning pale.

The president having asked her if she had anything to say against the nature of her punishment, she disdained to reply; then approaching her advocate, she said to him in a sweet penetrating voice,—"You have defended me as I wished to be defended, I thank you; I owe you a proof of my gratitude and my esteem, it shall be worthy of you. These gentlemen," pointing to her judges, "have just declared my property confiscated; I owe something at the prison, and leave you this debt to liquidate for me."

While they were interrogating her, and the jury were taking down her answers, she perceived among the audience a painter who was taking her portrait.

Without interrupting herself, she turned, complacently smiling, towards the artist, so that he might take her features the easier. She thought of immortality. She already posed herself before the future.

Behind the artist stood a young man, whose fair hair, blue eye, and pale complexion, denoted a native of the North; he raised himself on tiptoe to see the accused. His eyes were fixed upon her, like as on a phantom, the sight of which had contracted the eye with the immobility of death. At each reply of the young girl, the mature sense and feminine sound of whose voice made him shiver and change colour, he seemed to drink in her words, and unite in gesture, attitude, and enthusiasm with the sentiments she expressed. Several times he attracted her attention by his involuntary exclamations, which could be heard above the low murmur of the audience.

At the moment when sentence of death was being passed upon her, this young man half rose, and appeared about to protest, then sat down as if his strength had left him. Charlotte, perfectly indifferent to her own fate, saw the movement. She comprehended that at the moment when all abandoned her on earth, one soul attached itself to hers, that, in the midst of this crowd of people, either indifferent or hostile, she had found an unknown friend; she thanked him with a look, it was their only interview on earth.

The young stranger was Adam Lux, a German republican, sent to Paris by the revolutionists of May-

ence to combine the movements of Germany with those of France for the common cause of human reason and the liberty of the peoples. His eyes followed her, till she disappeared behind the swords of gens-d'armes down the vault-like staircase. From that moment he never ceased to think of her.

Returned to the Conciergerie, which would in a few moments give her over to the scaffold, Charlotte Corday smiled upon her fellow-prisoners, who were standing in rows in the passages and courts to see her pass. She said to the porter, "I hoped that we might have breakfasted together; but the judges have kept me so long up-stairs, that you must forgive me for breaking my word." The executioner arrived, she asked for a moment to finish a letter which she had began. It was directed to Doulcet de Pontécoulant, whom she had known at her aunt's, and whom she thought that she had vainly invoked for her defence. This was the note: "Doulcet de Pontécoulant is a coward for having refused to defend me when it was so easy. He who did so acquitted himself with all possible dignity. He shall have my gratitude to the last moment."

This vengeance was in error. He whom she accused from the borders of the grave, young Pontécoulant, was absent from Paris, and had not received her letter: his generosity and his courage answered for his acceptation. Charlotte carried her injustice with her to the scaffold.

The artist who had sketched the features of Charlotte Corday before the tribunal, was M. Hauer, a painter and officer of the National Guard, of the section of the Theâtre Français. Returned to her cell, she begged the porter to let him in to finish it. M. Hauer was introduced. Charlotte thanked him for the interest he took in her fate, and sat with serenity before him: one would have thought that in permitting him to transmit her features and physiognomy to posterity, she had charged him to transmit her soul and visible patriotism to future generations. She talked to M. Hauer of his art, of the event of the day, of the peace that she experienced since she had consummated her great deed. She spoke of her young friends at Caen, and begged the artist to make a small copy of the portrait he was then taking, and send the miniature to her family.

In the midst of this interview mingled with pauses, the door was opened gently behind her; it was the executioner. Charlotte, turning round, saw the scissors and red shift that he carried on his arm. She turned pale, and shuddered at the sight of these things. "What already?" she involuntarily exclaimed. Then growing firm, and looking at the unfinished portrait: "Monsieur," said she to the artist, with sad but benevolent smile, "I do not know how to thank you for the care you have taken; I have but this to offer you, keep it as a remembrance of your goodness and my gratitude;" and taking the scissors from the hand of the executioner, she cut off a lock of her long hair which had escaped from her cap, and presented it to

M. Hauer. The gens-d'armes and the executioner at these words, and this gesture, felt the tears start to their eyes.

The family of M. Hauer still possess this portrait which death had interrupted. The head only was painted, the bust scarcely sketched. But the artist, who saw all the preparations for the scaffold, was so struck at the sinister but splendid effect that the red shift added to the beauty of the model, that after the execution of Charlotte he painted her in that costume.

A priest, authorized by the public accuser, presented himself, according to custom, to offer her the consolations of religion. "Thank those who were so attentive as to send you, but I have no need of your ministry; the blood that I have shed, and my blood that I am going to shed, are the only sacrifices that I can offer to the Eternal."

The executioner then cut her locks; she gathered them up, and looking at them for the last time, gave them to Madame Richard. Her hands were next bound, she was then arrayed in the shift of the condemned. "This," said she, "is the toilette of death, performed by rather rough hands, but it will conduct me to immortality."

Just as she was getting into the cart to go to execution, a fearful storm burst over Paris. The rain and lightning did not disperse the crowd that blocked up the streets, the squares, the bridges by which she should pass. Mobs of frenzied women followed her with their maledictions. Insensible to all these out-

rages, she looked with serenity and pity upon the people.

The sky cleared, the rain that had soaked her garments, showed under the wet woollen the graceful formation of her body, like that of a woman coming out of a bath. Her hands tied behind her, obliged her to lift up her head: this constraint of the muscles gave a fixedness to her attitude, and threw out the curves of her stature. The setting sun cast a light upon her face that gave it the look of a glory. The colour of her cheeks reflected by the red shift gave to her visage a startling splendour. One scarcely knew if it were the apotheosis or the execution of beauty that followed in this tumultuous procession. Robespierre, Danton, Camille, Desmoulins had placed themselves on her passage to get a glimpse of her. All those who had a presentiment of assassination were curious to study the expression of a fanaticism that might threaten them to-morrow. She resembled celestial justice, satisfied and transfigured. She seemed to be looking every now and then for a look of intelligence, among those millions of up-turned faces, on which her eye might rest.

Adam Lux was waiting for the cortège at the entrance of the Rue Saint Honoré. He piously followed the wheels of the cart to the foot of the scaffold.

"He engraved on his heart," said he to himself, "that unalterable sweetness in the midst of the howlings of the barbarous mob, that look, so penetrating and sweet, those sparks as of thoughts of fire that escaped from her beautiful eyes, and that spoke of a

soul as intrepid, as gentle. Eyes so lovely that they should have melted a heart of stone," cries he. "Unique and immortal remembrances, which, while they broke my heart, filled it with emotions until then unknown. Emotions, whose sweetness equals their bitterness, and which must die with me. Let the place of her execution be sanctified, let them raise a statue with these words, GREATER THAN BRUTUS. To die for her, to be buffeted like her by the hand of the executioner; feel while dying the same cold steel of the same knife that severed the angelic head of Charlotte, to be united to her in heroism, liberty, love, death, henceforth is all I desire. I shall never attain to such sublime virtue; but then, it is but just that the adored object should be above the adorer."

THUS an enthusiastic and immaterial love, born of the last look of the victim, accompanied, unknown to her, her every step towards the scaffold, and was disposed to follow her, and merit, with her model and ideal, the eternal union of souls.

The cart stopped. Charlotte turned pale when she saw the fatal instrument. She soon recovered her natural colour, and mounted the slippery steps of the scaffold, with a step as firm and light as her long shift and bound hands would allow. When the executioner, in order to uncover her neck, removed the handkerchief that covered her throat, her humiliated modesty showed more emotion than at approaching death; but regaining her serenity, she seemed to bound joyfully

towards eternity—she placed her neck, of her own accord, under the axe. Her head rolled down and rebounded. One of the executioner's valets, named Legros, took the head with one hand and slapped it with the other, out of a vile adulation of the people. It is said that the cheeks blushed at the outrage, as if dignity and modesty had survived the sentiment of life. The crowd, irritated, did not accept the homage; a shudder of horror seemed to creep over the multitude, and demand vengeance for the indignity.

MADAME ROLAND.

1754—8th NOVEMBER, 1793.

MADAME ROLAND was born in that intermediate condition in which families, scarcely emancipated from labour, are, so to speak, amphibious, between the proletary and the tradespeople, and in their manners retain the virtues and simplicity of the people, while they already participate in the light of society. A portrait of her childhood represents the young girl in her father's studio, holding a book in one hand and a graver's tool in the other. This portrait is the symbolical definition of the social condition in which Madame Roland was born,—at the precise point between manual labour and that of the mind.

Her father, Gratien Phlipon, was an engraver and enamel painter. He united to those two professions the diamond and gem trade. He was a man always aspiring above his means, an industrial adventurer, who constantly destroyed his humble fortune by wish-

ing to give it the proportions which his dreams of ambition suggested. He worshipped his daughter, and was not contented with the perspective of a studio for her. He gave her an education like that of a lady of the greatest fortune, like nature, which had endowed her with a heart to grace the highest destinies. It is well known what suffering and annoyances the chimeras of men of that character will occasion in their family.

The young girl grew up in this atmosphere of mental luxury and real ruin. Endowed with premature judgment, she already discovered the disorder of her family, and fled to her mother's reason against the father's illusions and presentiments of the future.

Marguerite Bimont, her mother, had brought her husband not only her serene beauty and a soul superior to her destiny, but also angelic piety and the resignation which it inspires, that fortified her against both ambition and despair. The mother of seven children, who had been torn from her breast by death, she had concentrated on her only daughter the whole power of her love. It was the strength of that love that protected her from any weakness in the education that she bestowed on her child. She held in a just equilibrium her heart, her intelligence, her imagination, and her reason. The mould in which she cast the young soul was a graceful one, but of iron. One would have thought that she foresaw the destinies of the child, and that she mingled with the accomplishments of the young girl something masculine that makes heroes and martyrs.

Nature bent herself admirably to this, for she had given the young pupil an intelligence superior to her beauty. That beauty of her early years of which Madame Roland herself traced the principal features with a childlike complaisance in the happy pages of her Memoirs, was far from having acquired that character of energy, melancholy, and of majesty which love restrained, virile thoughts, and misfortune gave her at a later period.

Her form was tall and supple, her shoulders effaced, her chest broad, raised by free, strong breathing; her attitude was modest and becoming, her neck held in a posture that indicated intrepidity; her hair was black and glossy, her blue eyes were browned by the shadow of thought; her look, which displayed the soul of tenderness and energy; her nose, that of a Grecian statue; her mouth rather large, open to smile as to speak; her chin, round and raised, imparted to the oval form of her face that voluptuous and feminine grace without which even beauty does not produce love; her skin marbled with the tints of life, and veined with her rich blood, which carried it at the slightest impression to her blushing cheeks; the sound of her voice borrowed its vibrations from the grave fibres of her chest, and were profoundly modulated by the movements of her heart (précious gift), for the sound of voice, which is the communication of emotion in woman, is the vehicle of persuasion in the orator; by these two titles Nature owed her the charm of voice, and had given it to her. Such, at 18 years of age, was the portrait of this young

girl that obscurity concealed so long in its shadow, as if to prepare for life or death a soul stronger and more accomplished.

Her intelligence lighted up this envelope with a precocious and sudden brightness which already resembled inspiration. She aimed at the most difficult subjects, so to speak, by spelling them out. What is taught her sex at her age was not sufficient for her. The masculine education of men had attraction, and became mere play for her. Her powerful mind required all the instruments of thought as an exercise. Religion, history, philosophy, music, painting, dancing, exact sciences, chemistry, foreign languages, and learned languages, she learnt all and wanted more. She herself formed her thought from all the rays that the obscurity of her condition allowed her to obtain through her father's laboratory. She even secretly took the books that belonged to the young apprentices, which they brought and forgot for her in the studio. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, the English philosophers, fell into her hands in this manner. But her true nurse was Plutarch.

"I shall never forget," says she, "the Lent of 1763, during which I carried this book to church instead of a prayer-book; it was from this time that the impressions and ideas date that made me republican, without my dreaming that I should ever be one."

After Plutarch it was Fénélon that moved her

heart the most. Tasso and the poets came next. Heroism, virtue, and love should flow together from those three bases into the soul of a woman destined to this triple palpitation of great impressions.

In the midst of the confusion of her soul, her reason remained cold and her purity without stain; she scarcely owns to light and fugitive emotions of the heart and senses. "While reading them behind the screen which closed my room in my father's parlour," says she, "my respiration was raised. I felt a sudden fire cover my face, and my altered voice would have betrayed my agitation. I was Eucharis for Telemachus, Herminia for Tancredi. However transformed into them, I never dreamt of my being anything for anybody. I sought nothing around me, I never examined myself. Yet I remember having seen with trembling a young painter named Taboral; he used to come to see my father sometimes; he was about 20, had a soft voice, an intelligent face, blushing like a young girl. When I heard him in the studio I always had a pencil to fetch or some other thing, but his presence embarrassed me as much as it was agreeable to me, and I used to go away quicker than I had gone in, with a beating heart and trembling so that I went to hide myself in a little corner."

Although her mother was very pious, she did not forbid these studies to her daughter. She wished to inspire religion, not command it; full of good sense and toleration, she yielded her in confidence to her own reason, and wished neither to compress nor dry up seed which should hereafter bear its fruit in her heart.

A servile and not a voluntary religion seemed to her a degradation and a slavery that God could not accept as a tribute worthy of Him. The pensive soul of the young girl was naturally carried towards those great objects of happiness or eternal misery; she was to plunge earlier and deeper than another into the infinite. The reign of sentiment in her began with the love of God. The sublime delirium of her pious contemplations embellished the first years of her youth, resigned the rest to philosophy, and seemed as though they would ever preserve her from the storms of the passions. Her devotion was ardent; it received the impress of her soul, aspired to the cloister, and dreamed of martyrdom. She entered a convent. For a time she was happy, giving her thoughts to the mysticism of her heart and its earliest friendships. The monotonous regularity of this life softly lulled the activity of her meditations. At the hours of liberty she never played with her companions; but withdrew under some tree to read and dream. She was sensitive, like Rousseau, to the beauty of foliage, the murmuring of the grass, the perfume of flowers. She admired the hand of God, and embraced it in His works. Overflowing with gratitude and internal joy, she went to church to adore Him. There the majestic sounds of the organ joined to the voices of the young nuns completely ravished her to ecstasy. The Catholic religion has all those mystical fascinations for the senses, and voluptuous effects for the imagination. A novice took the veil during this abode in the convent. Her presentation at the grating, her white veil, her

crown of roses, the chants so sweet and calm which were to conduct her from the world to heaven, the pall spread over her buried beauty and palpitating heart, thrilled through the young artist, and produced a paroxysm of tears. Her destiny offered to her the image of great sacrifices; she foresaw in herself the courage and suffering.

THE charm and the habit of these religious sensations were never effaced in her. Philosophy, which afterwards became her creed, dispersed her faith, but left those impressions.

She could not assist, without respect and attraction, at the ceremonies of religion, the mysteries of which her reason had repudiated. The spectacle of feeble men uniting to implore and adore the Father of men, touched her thought. The music carried it to heaven. She left the temples of the Christians more happy, and a better woman. So far do the remembrances of childhood influence and cast their tints over the most agitated of lives.

This passionate love for the infinite and this pious sentiment of nature continued to intoxicate her when she returned to her father's house.

"The situation of the paternal house was not possessed," says she, "of the calm solitude of the convent. However, plenty of air, and a large space were available from the top of our house near the Pont-Neuf to my dreamy and romantic imagination. How often from my window, which faced the north, have I

not contemplated with emotion the vast deserts of the skies, the supreme vault, so azure, so splendidly drawn from the blue east far beyond the Pont-au-Change to the golden west, whose tints of purple melted away behind the trees in the Champs Elysées and the homesteads of Chaillot! I never failed thus to occupy some moments at the close of a fine day; and often tears flowed deliriously from my eyes, while my heart swelled with an inexpressible sentiment, happy to beat, grateful for its existence, offering to the Being of beings a pure homage worthy of Him." Alas! when she wrote those lines she could only see in her mind that bit of the narrowed sky of Paris, and the remembrance of those brilliant evenings only served to brighten with a fugitive illusion the walls of her prison cell.

But then she was happy, with her aunt Angelica and her mother, in what she calls the fine neighbourhood of the Ile St Louis. On that long line of quays, that tranquil river-side, she breathed the fresh air on summer evenings, as she considered the graceful course of the river and the country which spread far away. She crossed those quays, too, in the mornings in a state of holy zeal to go to church, without meeting on her lonely road anything to distract her attention. Her father, who favoured her high studies, and who was delighted at his daughter's success, nevertheless wished to initiate her into his art, and made her begin to engrave. She learnt how to use the burine, and succeeded, as with everything else. She did not yet

earn a salary, but on the occasion of the birthdays of her grand-parents she presented them as her tribute now with a head she had applied herself to draw with that intention, then a copper-plate, on which she had engraved emblems or flowers; in return she received jewels or objects of adornment, which she confesses to have always been fond of.

But this taste, natural to her sex and age, did not serve to detach her from the humblest occupation of the household. She did not blush when having appeared in an envied toilet on Sunday, at church or walking—she had to go to market with her mother in a simple print dress during the week. She often went alone to buy parsley or salad when the servant had forgotten it. Although she felt it beneath her to stoop to these domestic cares from the heights of her Plutarch, the heaven of her dreams, she showed so much grace combined with a dignity so natural, that the fruiterer's wife preferred to serve her before any other customer, and those who had arrived before her were not offended at the privilege.

This young girl, this future Heloise of the 18th century, who read serious works, who explained the circles of the celestial sphere, who handled the pencil and burine, and who already conceived bold thoughts and passionate sentiments in her soul, was often called into the kitchen to cleanse vegetables. This mixture of grave thoughts, elegant exercises, and domestic cares, ordered by her mother's wisdom, seemed to prepare her, while yet afar, for the vicissitudes of her fortune, and helped her, later, to bear them like

Rousseau at the Charmettes, arranging the funeral pile of Madame de Warens with the hand that was to write the "Contrat Social," or Philopæmen cutting wood.

While living this retired life she sometimes saw the superior world shining above her; the lightning that showed her high society offended her eyes more than it dazzled them. The pride of this aristocratic world, which saw her but held her in no account, weighed on her mind. A society in which she had no rank seemed to her ill-organized. It was less envy than revolted justice in her.

The young girl, conducted once by her grandmother to an aristocratic house, of which her humble parents were, so to speak, freed servants, was violently wounded at the tone of caressing superiority with which her grandmother and herself were treated. "My pride was astonished, my blood boiled hotter than usual, I felt myself redden. I had not yet asked myself why this woman should sit on a couch, and my grandmother sit on a stool, but I had the sentiment that would lead to this reflection, and I saw the end of the visit with a relief as from something that oppresses.

At another time she was taken to spend a week at Versailles, in the palace of that king and queen whose throne she would one day undermine. Lodging in the attics, with one of the domestics of the Château, she saw closely the royal luxury paid for, as she

thought, by the misery of the people, and the greatness of kings raised upon the servility of the courtiers.

The great spreads, the promenades, the king's play, the presentations, passed beneath her eyes in all their vanity and in all their pomp. These superstitions of pomp were repulsive to a soul fed by the philosophers, with the truth, liberty, and virtue of the ancients. The obscure names, the plebeian costume of the friends who conducted her to the sight, gained nothing but looks without attention, and a few words that savoured less of favour than protection. The sentiment of her youth, of her beauty and her merit, unperceived in this crowd that only adored favour and etiquette, weighed upon her heart. Philosophy, natural pride, imagination, and the rigidity of her soul were equally wounded during her stay at this place.

"I preferred," said she, "the statues in the gardens to the people in the palace." And when her mother asked her if she was pleased with her trip,

"Yes," she answered, "provided it is soon over. A few days longer, and I should so detest the people that I see that I should not know what to do with my hatred."

"What harm do they do you?" asked her mother. "Feel the injustice and contemplate absurdity."

On seeing the splendours of the despotism of Louis XIV., which was becoming extinguished in corruption, she thought of Athens; and she forgot

the death of Socrates, the exile of Aristides, the condemnation of Phocion.

"I could not foresee," says she sadly, as she writes these lines, "that destiny reserved for me to be witness to crimes similar to those of which they were victims, and to participate in the glory of their martyrdom, after having professed their principles."

Thus the imagination, the character, and the studies of this woman prepared her without her being aware of it for the republic. Religion only, then so powerful over her, would have held her in that state of resignation which makes one submit the thoughts to the will of God. But philosophy became her faith; that faith became a part of her politics. The emancipation of peoples was joined in her thought with the emancipation of ideas. She believed that in overthrowing thrones she was working for men, in overturning altars she was working for God. Such is the confession she herself makes of her change.

MEANWHILE this young girl attracted a number of pretenders to her hand. Her father wanted to marry her into the class to which he himself belonged. He loved, he esteemed commerce, because he believed it to be the source of all riches. His daughter despised it, because it was in her eyes the source of avarice and the aliment of cupidity. Men in this condition disgusted her. In her husband she wanted ideas and

sentiments similar to her own. Her ideal was a soul, and not a fortune.

"Bred in my childhood in the intimacy of the great men of all ages, familiarized with high ideas and grand examples, should I have lived with Plato, with all the philosophers, with all the poets, with all the political men of antiquity, only to marry a tradesman who would neither judge or feel anything with me?"

She who wrote those lines was at this time asked in marriage by a rich butcher in the neighbourhood. She refused every one.

"I will not descend from the world of my noble chimeras," replied she to the ever-renewed instances of her father. "What I want is not a condition, it is a man. I will die lonely rather than prostitute my soul in a union with a being who does not understand it."

Deprived of her mother by premature death, alone in her father's house, in which disorder had been introduced with a second love, melancholy seized on her heart, but did not subjugate it. She withdrew within herself to recruit all her strength, to resist her loneliness and misfortune. Reading the Heloise of Rousseau, which had been lent her, made upon her heart the same kind of impression that Plutarch had made upon her mind. Plutarch had showed her liberty, Rousseau had made her dream of happiness; the one had strengthened, the other had melted. She felt the need to open her heart. Her sadness became

her muse. She began to write, to console herself in yielding to her own interests, without having any intention of becoming a writer; she acquired by these solitary exercises that eloquence with which she afterwards animated her friends.

Thus ripened this woman, patient and resolved, to meet her destiny, when she believed that she had found the antique man dreamt of so long in her imagination. This man was Roland de la Platière.

He was presented to her under the auspices of one of her young friends of childhood married at Amiens, where Roland exercised the functions of inspector of manufactures. "You will receive this letter," wrote her friend, "by the philosopher of whom I have often spoken to you, M. Roland, an enlightened man, of ancient habits, in whom one can reproach nothing but his worship of the ancients, his contempt for his age, and his too high esteem of his own virtues." "This portrait," says she, "was well drawn. I saw a man of more than forty years, tall in stature, careless in his attitude, with that sort of stiffness that is acquired by lonely habits; but his manners were simple and easy, and without having the elegance of the world, they allied the politenesss of a man well-born to the gravity of the philosopher. He was very thin, of an accidentally yellow complexion, his open forehead, already growing uncovered, did not alter his regular but unseductive features. Besides, a keen smile and a lively expression developed his physiognomy, and brought it out like another face when animated in speaking or listening. His voice was

masculine, his speech brief, like that of a man who was short-breathed; his [illegible] full of matter because his head was full of ideas, occupied the mind more than it flattered the ear. His diction was pregnant, but sharp, and without harmony. It is a rare gift and powerful over the senses," adds she, "that charm of the voice; not only does it belong to the quality of sound, it results from that delicacy of sensibility which varies the expression in modulating the accent." That is to say that Roland had it not.

Roland, born of an honest family of the middle class, that had held the office of magistracy, and pretended to nobility, was the youngest of five brothers. He was destined to the church. To evade that destiny, which he disliked, he left his paternal home and fled to Nantes. He entered into the service of a shipowner, who was about to embark for India with commercial intentions, when an illness prevented his departure at the last moment. One of his relatives, who was an inspector of manufactures at Rouen, took him into his office. This administration, animated by the spirit of Turgot, touched upon the highest problems of government, through the arts, sciences, and political economy, and was peopled with philosophers. Roland distinguished himself in it. The government sent him to Italy to study the advancement of commerce.

He separated himself with difficulty from his young friend, and wrote to her regularly letters which should serve as notes to a work which he proposed to write upon Italy,—letters in which sentiment showed

itself, through science, more like the study of a philosopher than the correspondence of a lover.

When he returned she saw in him a friend; his age, his gravity, his habits, his laborious studies, made her look upon him as on a sage who only lived by reason. In the union that they meditated and which was less like love than like the associations of the days of Socrates and Plato, the one sought rather a disciple than a wife, the other married a master rather than a husband. M. Roland returned to Amiens. He wrote from there to her father to solicit the hand of his daughter. A dry refusal was his answer. He feared in M. Roland, whose austerity was repulsive to him, a censor of himself, a tyrant for his daughter. Informed of this refusal by her father, she became indignant, and retired into a convent deprived of everything. She lived on the coarsest food, which she herself prepared. She plunged into study and fortified her heart against adversity. *She revenged herself by deserving that happiness which fate refused to grant her.* In the evenings a visit from her friends, in the day one hour's walk in a garden surrounded by high walls, that sentiment of strength which makes one stand firm against fate, that melancholy which softens the soul towards itself, and feeds it with its own sensibility, assisted her to pass through the long months of the winter of her voluntary captivity.

A feeling of internal bitterness, however, poisoned in her even her sacrifice. She felt that the sentiment was not rewarded. She had hoped that M. Roland, on hearing of her resolution and retreat, would have

hastened to take her from her convent and mingled their destinies. Time passed. Roland did not come; he scarcely wrote. At the end of six months he came. He became again enamoured at seeing her through the grating; he determined to offer her his hand, which she accepted. But so much calculation, hesitation, and coldness, had obliterated what little enthusiasm remained in the young recluse,—and reduced the sentiment to severe esteem. She devoted rather than gave herself. It seemed to her a fine thing to immolate herself for the happiness of a good man; but she accomplished the sacrifice with all the seriousness of reason, and without any enthusiasm of the heart. Her marriage was to her an act of virtue which she enjoyed, not because it was pleasant, but because it appeared to her sublime.

The devoted pupil of Jean-Jacques-Rousseau found this to be the decisive point of her life. The marriage of Madame Roland is an evident imitation of that of Heloise marrying M. de Volmar. But the bitterness of the reality was soon to be seen throngh the heroism of her devotion. She says, "In occupying myself continually about the felicity of the man to whom I was associated, I perceived that something was wanting to my own. I never ceased for a single instant to see in my husband one of the most estimable men in existence, to whom I felt it an honour to belong; but I often felt that there was a disparity between us, that the ascendance of a domineering character, joined to that of 20 years older than myself, rendered one of these superiorities too many. If we

were living in solitude, I sometimes found hours that proved difficult to pass away. If we went into society, I was loved by persons that I perceived might touch me. I plunged into my husband's work, I became his copyist, his correcter of proofs; I fulfilled these tasks with humility, without murmuring, that contrasted with a spirit so free and exercised as mine. But this humility came from my heart. I respected my husband so much, that I liked to believe him superior to me. I was so frightened at a shadow on his face, and he held so tenaciously to his opinions, that I only acquired, when very late, the strength to contradict him. I united to these labours those of the household; having perceived that certain diet only agreed with his delicate health, I took care to prepare his food myself. I lived with him four years at Amiens. I became a mother and nurse there. We worked together at the 'Encyclopédie Nouvelle,' of which the commercial articles had been entrusted to him. We only left those studies to take walks in the fields outside the town."

Roland, absolute and personal, had insisted at the commencement of his marriage that his wife should cease to see the young companions whom she had loved at the convent, and who resided at Amiens. He dreaded the slightest sharing of affection. His prudence passed the bounds of reason. So austere an union as marriage requires the distractions of friendship. This tyranny of an exclusive sentiment was not redeemed by love. Roland wanted all from his wife's complaisance. If nothing wavered in her soul,

she felt her sacrifices, and enjoyed the accomplishment of her duty as the stoic enjoys pain.

After some years spent at Amiens, Roland obtained the same employment in Lyons, his native city. In winter he lived in the town; and he spent the rest of the year in the country at his paternal home in which his mother lived, a woman respectable through her age, but of an irritable temper in domestic life. Madame Roland, in all the bloom of her youth, beauty, genius, thus found herself shut up between an implacable mother-in-law, a careless brother-in-law, and a domineering husband. The most passionate affection would have hardly sufficed to compensate for the annoyances of her situation. To soften it she had nothing but the sentiment of her duty, her work, her philosophy, and her child. She contrived it, and ended by transforming this austere retreat into a home of harmony and peace.

It was at La Platière, situated at the foot of the mountains of Beaujolais, in the large basin of the Saône in front of the Alps, that Madame Roland plunged into the fulness of that nature she had dreamt of so often in her childhood. It was there that her simple tastes and loving soul found the aliments and exercises of her sensibility.

She shared her life between the cares of the household, the cultivation of her mind, and active charity, that culture of the heart. Adored by the peasants, to whom she became a providence, she applied to the

relief of their misery the little she could spare from the strictest economy, and to the cure of their diseases the knowledge she had acquired of medicine. People came to fetch her three or four leagues to visit a sick person. On Sundays the steps of her front door were covered with the infirm, who came to obtain relief, or with the cured, to thank her by little proofs of their gratitude either in baskets of chesnuts, goats' milk, cheeses, or apples from their orchards. It was an enjoyment to her to find the country people just, sensible, grateful. Her imagination conceived the people of great capitals transformed.

The burning of castles, brigandage, massacres, taught her a little later that those calm seas of men are subject to more terrible tempests than those of the ocean, that there must be institutions for societies as the waves require a bed, and that force is as indispensable as justice to the government of nations.

MEANWHILE the Revolution of '89 had sounded, and had surprised her in the bosom of her retreat. Intoxicated with philosophy, impassioned of the ideal of humanity, adorer of ancient liberty, she became inflamed by the first spark from this seat of the new ideas; she honestly believed that this Revolution, like a birth without pain, would regenerate the human race, destroy the misery of the unfortunate classes over which she mourned, and renew the face of the earth. There is imagination even in the piety of great souls.

From that day Madame Roland felt within her that fire which would only be extinguished in her blood. All that latent love which slept in her soul was converted into enthusiasm and passion towards humanity. Her sensibility, far too ardent for one man, was extended over a whole people. She loved the Revolution like a lover, she communicated the flame to her husband and his friends. All her restrained passion was poured out in her opinions. She revenged herself on her destiny, which refused her happiness for herself, by consuming herself for the sake of others. Happy and beloved, she would have been but a woman. Unhappy and isolated, she became a party chief.

The opinions of M. and Madame Roland raised up against them at the first moment all the commercial aristocracy of Lyons, a pure upright town, but a town of money where calculation prevails, and where ideas have the weight and immobility of the interests. Ideas have an irresistible current which draws even the most stagnant population. Lyons was drawn in and flooded by the opinions of the time. M. Roland was carried for the municipality at the first elections. He pronounced himself with the rigidity of his principles, and with the energy which he drew from the soul of his wife. Feared by the timid, worshipped by the impatient, his name became an insult, then a banner. Public favour avenged the insults of the rich. He was deputed to Paris, by the Municipal Council, to defend the commercial interests of Lyons, in the committees of the Constituent Assembly.

Roland's affinities with philosophers and economists, who formed the practical party of philosophy; his forced connection with the influential members of the Assembly, his literary tastes, and above all the attraction and natural seduction which draw and retain eminent men around a beautiful, eloquent, passionate woman, soon made of Madame Roland's salon, a focus not very noticeable at first, but an ardent one, of the Revolution.

It was on the 20th of February, 1791, that Madame Roland returned to Paris, that she had left five years before a young girl unnoticed and without name, and where she returned like a flame to animate a whole party, found a republic, reign for a moment, and then die. She felt a confused presentiment of this destiny. Genius and will know their power; they feel before others, and prophesy their mission. Madame Roland seemed carried before her time into the centre of the scene of action. The day after the one on which she arrived, she went to the séance of the Assembly. She saw *the powerful Mirabeau, the astonishing Cazalès, the audacious Maury, the astucious Lameth, the cool and steady Barnave.* She remarked with the scorn of hatred, in the attitude and language of the right side, that superiority which proceeds from the habit of command and confidence in the respect of the masses; in the left side, inferiority of manners and insolence mixed up with subalternity. Sensible woman as she was, she understood those shades; but far from allowing herself to be allured by the superiority of the aristocracy, she became the more indignant

against a party that might be crushed but which could not be humbled.

It was at this time that she and her husband became intimate with some of the most fervent of the apostles of the popular ideas. It was not with those who shone with the lustre of public favour and the brilliancy of talent, it was with those who seemed to love the Revolution for the sake of the Revolution itself, and who devoted themselves with sublime disinterestedness, not to the success of their own fortune, but to the progress of humanity. Brissot came one of the first. M. and Madame Roland had long corresponded with him on the subjects of political economy and the great problems of liberty. Their ideas had fraternized and grown together. They were already united by every fibre of their revolutionary hearts, but they did not yet know each other. Brissot brought Pétion, his co-disciple and friend. Buzot and Robespierre, both members of the same Assembly, were introduced. Buzot, whose pensive beauty would agitate the heart and touch the admiration of Madame Roland; Robespierre, whose uneasy soul and the fanaticism of whose hatred already threw all the councils in which they conspired in the name of the people, into a ferment of agitation; Brissot, Pétion, Buzot, and Robespierre agreed to meet four evenings a week in Madame Roland's drawing-room.

Madame Roland thus found herself from the earliest days in the centre of movement. Her invisible hand

touched the first threads of the confused web which hereafter should unfold the greatest events. This *rôle*, the only one her sex permitted her, flattered at once her woman's pride and her political passion. She managed it with that modesty that would have been in her the *chef-d'œuvre* of cleverness, had it not been a gift of her nature. Seated outside the circle, at a work-table, she plied her needle, or she wrote, while she listened with apparent indifference to her friends' discussions. Often tempted to take a part, she bit her lips to restrain her thoughts. Herself the soul of energy and action, the length and verbose diffuseness of these councils without result inspired her with secret disdain, action evaporated in words, and the hour passed, carrying with it the opportunity which never returns.

THERE is for history a sinister curiosity to see what was the first impression which Madame Roland had of the man who, intimate in her friendship and conspiring with her, would one day overthrow the power of his friends, immolate them in a mass, and send herself to the scaffold. No feeling of repulsion seems at this time to have warned her that she was conspiring to her own death when she conspired to the fortune of Robespierre.

On the 10th August Madame Roland, to save Robespierre's life, performed one of those movements which reveal a soul full of courageous friendship, and which leave their trace even in the heart of the ungrateful. After the day of the Champs de Mars, Robespierre

was accused of having conspired with those who drew up the Petition for Forfeiture, and threatened as a seditionist by the national guard, was obliged to conceal himself. Madame Roland and her husband went at eleven o'clock at night to his retreat in the Marais, to offer him a safer asylum in their house. He had already fled from his home. Madame Roland went from there to Buzot, their mutual friend, and implored him to go to the Feuillans, where he had some influence at that time, and to hasten to exculpate Robespierre before the decree of accusation could have passed against him.

Buzot hesitated a moment, then "I will do all I can," said he, "to save this unfortunate young man, although I am far from sharing certain persons' opinion concerning him. He thinks too much of himself to love liberty; but he serves it, and that is enough, I shall be there to defend him." Thus three of Robespierre's future victims conspired at night and unknown to him to save the life of him through whom they were to die.

Destiny is a mystery out of which the strangest coincidences arise, which lays traps for men both in their virtues and in their crimes. Death is everywhere; but whatever the fate, virtue alone never repents. In the prisons of the Conciergerie Madame Roland remembered that night with pleasure. If Robespierre remembered it in his power, the souvenir must have been colder to his heart than the executioner's axe.

After the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, M. and Madame Roland left Paris, their mission being ended. This woman, who came burning from the seat of factions and politics, returned to La Platrière to cultivate the vine and resume her rustic housekeeping; but she had tasted the intoxication of the Revolution. The movement in which she had participated a moment had still its attractions far away; she had kept up a correspondence with Robespierre and Buzot, dry and political with Robespierre, tender and pathetic with Buzot. Her mind, her soul, her heart, all called her back. Her husband and herself held an apparently impartial deliberation to decide if they should bury themselves in the country, or if they should return to Paris. But the ambition of one and the soul of the other had pronounced, unknown to them and before them. The most frivolous pretext sufficed for their impatience. In the month of December they were again inhabiting Paris.

It was the time of the success of their friends. Pétion had just been named Mayor, and created a republic in his commune; Robespierre, excluded from the Legislative Assembly by the law which forbade the re-election of the Constituent Assembly, raised himself a tribune at the Jacobins; Brissot entered instead of Buzot into the new Assembly, and his renown as publicist and statesman rallied round his doctrines the young Girondins.

These, arrived from their department with the ardour of their age and the impulse of another revolutionary wave, threw themselves, on arriving,

within the circles that Robespierre, Buzot, Laclos, Danton, and Brissot had prepared.

Roland, the friend of all these men, but on the second tier and hidden in their shadow, had one of those soundless reputations, the more powerful over opinion that it was not noised about; he was spoken of as an antique virtue, wrapped in the simplicity of a man of the fields. Under his silence thought was imagined; in mystery the oracle was presumed. The brilliancy and genius of his young wife attracted all eyes towards him; even his mediocrity, the only power that virtue can wield against envy, served him. As nobody feared him, everybody wanted to push him forward; Pétion to cover himself, Robespierre to undermine him, Brissot to put his bad reputation under the shelter of a proverbial probity; Buzot, Vergniaud, Louvet, Gensonné and the Girondins out of respect for his science and Madame Roland's attractions; even the court out of confidence in his honesty and disdain for his influence. This man marched towards power without moving himself, carried thither by the favour of a party, by the prestige of the unknown over opinion, by the disdain of his enemies, and by the genius of his wife.

We cannot follow him here. Roland's ministration belongs to general history that we have related elsewhere. Fortune did not surprise Madame Roland. She was ambitious not of power but of glory. Glory only lights up high places, and she ardently wished to

see her husband rise. She left the ministry without losing any of her influence, and without regretting power, since she carried with her her genius, her patriotism, and her friends. The conjuration only changed places with her; from the ministry of the interior she passed altogether into the little cenacle that she had united and inspired with her passion.

This cenacle grew daily. This woman's attraction was confounded in the hearts of her friends with the attraction of liberty. They adored in her the future republic. The love for her, that these young men did not own to themselves was unknown to them apart from their politics. Ideas only become active and powerful when sentiment verifies them: she was the sentiment of her party.

But of those men that the passion of the Revolution drew round Madame Roland, he whom she preferred was Buzot. More attached to this young woman than to his party, Buzot was to her a friend; the others were only instruments or accomplices. She had soon judged Barbaroux whom his youth, rare beauty, and energy had naturally thrown into this faction of illusion and love governed by a woman. This judgment, tainted with some bitterness, was like a regret for the secret favour that this young man's exterior had at first inspired her with. She accuses herself of finding him so handsome, and seems to warn her own heart against the attractions of his eyes. "Barbaroux is so light," says she, "the adorations that women with-

out morals lavish on him destroys all seriousness in his sentiments. When I see these fine young men so intoxicated with the effect they produce, like Barbaroux and Hérault de Séchelles, I cannot help thinking that they worship themselves too much to adore their country enough."

If one may raise the veil that covered this virtuous woman's heart, who would not raise it herself for fear of discovering in it a sentiment contrary to her duty, one remains convinced that she instinctively leaned for a moment towards Barbaroux, but that her tenderness upon reflection was for Buzot. It is not given to either, duty or liberty to fill entirely the heart of a woman so beautiful, so passionate as she. Duty freezes the heart, politics deceive it, virtue restrains it, love fills it. Madame Roland loved Buzot, Buzot adored in her his inspirer, his idol. They may never have owned to each other in words a sentiment which would have been less sacred the day on which it became culpable. But what they hid from themselves they have involuntarily revealed at their death.

There are in the last hours of this man and woman sighs, gestures, words that in presence of death betray the secret concealed during life; but the secret thus betrayed retains its mystery of their sentiment. Posterity has a right to peep, but not to accuse.

Roland, an estimable but morose man, had the exigences of weakness without having gratitude and grace towards his companion. She remained faithful to him out of respect to herself more than from attraction to him. They loved the same cause—liberty.

But Roland's fanaticism was cold as pride, his wife's inflamed like love. She immolated herself every day to the glory of her husband; he scarcely perceived the sacrifice. One reads in her heart that she carries the yoke proudly, but it is heavy. She paints Buzot with pleasure and as the ideal of interior felicity. "Sensitive, ardent, melancholic," says she, "a passionate contemplator of nature, he appears made to taste and give happiness. This man would forget the universe in the secrets of private virtues, capable of sublime outbursts and constant affections, the vulgar that likes to lower all to which it cannot attain accuses him of reverie. Of gentle feature, elegant form, neatness reigns in him, that sense of cleanliness, decency which announces self-respect, as well as that for others. While the dregs of the nation are carrying flatterers and corrupters of the people into high places, while stranglers swear, drink, and dress in rags to fraternize with the people, Buzot professes the morals of Socrates and preserves the politeness of Scipio. And his house is pulled down, and he is banished like Aristides. I am surprised that they have not decreed that his name should be forgotten!" The man of whom she spoke in those terms from her dungeon, on the eve of her death, exiled, a wanderer, hidden in the grottoes of St Emilion, fell as if thunderstruck, and remained insane many days, when he heard of Madame Roland's death.

From the moment her husband retreated Madame

Roland despaired of liberty. The cold theories of Robespierre froze her heart; Marat's rags offended her sight. Shut up in solitude, she inquired if the ideal of the Revolution of which she had dreamed were not, after all, a mirage of the soul by which imaginations, athirst for good, are deceived by seductive perspectives, and which are converted into dearth and thirst when approached. The ardour of the struggle and the greatness of her courage had sustained her soul during the time her husband was in power. Now the activity of her thoughts returned upon herself and devoured her. The ingratitude of the people came before glory. Of all the promises of the Republic Madame Roland had seen nothing realized but ruin and crimes. Calumny, that had fixed itself upon her and her husband, alarmed her more than the scaffold. She had preserved her friends Barbaroux, Pétion, Louvet, Brissot, Buzot. She prepared to quit Paris, and again retire with her husband and child into her country house at Beaujolais. But it was not only to fly from the threatening noise of her enemies that she would go to her mountains; it was to fly from herself. The dangers that her friends were running revealed to her the strength of her sentiments for them. Chaste as the statues of antiquity of which she had made her model, and fearing to profane in her soul by the fire of a vulgar love that pure and supernatural fire of liberty, she resolved to go away. She needed her self-esteem more than glory, she wished to offer a stainless victim to death.

But the agitation of the time, the accounts that

Roland had to give of his ministry, and the growing dangers, obliged her to put off the day of departure from week to week.

Her soul divided between her pious worship of Roland, the love of her child, uneasiness about her friends, her vigilance over her own feelings, her sorrow over the miseries of her country, she suffered at the same time all the anguish of a wife, a mother, and a party-chief. She in her turn felt the bitterness of the hatred of the people, the poison of calumny, the coldness of the conjugal hearth, nocturnal alarms for the lives of husband and child, and all the anguish she could not pity in the queen. Her lodging, hidden in a dark street near the Panthéon, contained as many troubles and sighings as a palace.

On the 31st May, 1793, during the *séance* that decided the defeat of the Girondins, the revolutionary committee of the Commune sent armed men to arrest Roland in his house. The resentment of the old man, the genius and beauty of his wife, the popular renown which made of their home a hotbed of conspiracy against the Mountain; the declamations of Marat, the insinuations of Robespierre, the perpetual allusions made in the Jacobin papers to the occult power of this family, in short, the name of Rolandists given to the Girondins, and thus confounding the pretended crimes attributed to Roland with those attributed to his friends, had not permitted the people to forget the fallen minister. They feared this man too much

to forgive him. They expected to arrest in him a conspirator against the Republic, and find in his house both threads, web, and the whole soul of the party of federalism. At six o'clock in the evening, while the people surrounded the Convention, and while his friends were struggling at the Tribune, the sectionaries presented themselves at his house and commanded him to follow them before the revolutionary committee. They showed him a written order. "I do not recognize this power in the Constitution," said Roland, "and I shall not voluntarily obey orders that emanate from an illegal authority. If you employ violence, I can only oppose the resistance of a man of my age, but I shall protest to my last breath." "I have no orders to employ violence," said the chief of the sectionaries and bearer of the order of arrest; "I will go and refer to the council of the Commune, and I will leave my colleagues here to answer for you."

MADAME ROLAND, armed with all the indignation that the sentiment of the laws violated and her husband's danger inspires, precipitately writes a letter to the Convention to ask for vengeance. She, moreover, writes another letter to the president, praying to be admitted to the bar. She jumps into a hackney coach, and orders it to be driven to the Tuileries.

The crowd and the troops fill all the courts; she brings her veil down over her face for fear of being recognized by her enemies. Repulsed at first by the

sentinels, she contrives, by dint of artfulness and persistence, to get the hall of petitioners opened to her. There she hears during hours of agony the dull murmurs of the hall, and the tumults of the tribunes that are covering with invectives either her enemies or her friends. She sends her note to the president by a deputy of the Plaine, named Roze, who recognized and protects her. Roze returns after waiting a long time. He relates the murderous motions against the Girondins, the consternations of the party, the danger of the 22 proscribed heads, the impossibility in which the Convention is placed to make a diversion to this battle of life and death, to listen to and discuss the reclamation of a woman. She insists. Roze brings Vergniaud. Madame Roland and Vergniaud talk together while their party is crumbling away. "Let me get in; get me leave to speak," says the courageous woman to Vergniaud; "I shall express with such force truths that will not be useless to the Republic, and that shall wake up the Convention from its stupor. An example of courage may make the nation ashamed of itself." The eloquence that she felt in herself deceived her as to the cowardice of the assemblies. Verginaud groaned over her illusion, turns her from her intention, presses her hands in his as if for a supreme farewell, and returns to the hall, softened but strengthened, for a reply to Robespierre.

Madame Roland leaves the Tuileries, goes on foot to Louvet, whose courage she loved and wanted to invoke. Louvet was at the Convention. When she

returned the porter of the house in which she lived told her that Roland, delivered from the surveillance of the sectionaries, had hidden himself in a neighbour's house. She ran there; her husband had already changed his asylum. She followed him from house to house, and ended by finding him; and falling into his arms, she relates her attempts, rejoices at his escape, and goes out again to force the doors of the Convention.

NIGHT had set in two hours before, and this woman still rushed through the illuminated streets, without understanding of which party they were celebrating the triumph. Arrived at the Carrousel, where a little before 40,000 men were encamped, and where an immense multitude were agitating, she found the place empty and silent. A few sentinels only were guarding the doors of the Palais National. The *séance* had risen. She questioned a group of Sansculottes, who were watching round a cannon. They told her, with every accent of joy which they supposed her to share, that the commission of the Twelve was overthrown, that this sacrifice has reconciled the patriots, the Paris saves the Republic, that the reign of traitors is ended, and that the victorious municipality will not be long in arresting the Twenty-two. She returns in consternation to her home, kisses her sleeping child, and deliberates whether she shall prevent arrestation by flight. Her husband's hiding-place will not hold them both. The only asylum after this would have accredited

calumnies against her purity which she dreaded more than death. She decided to wait for her fate and brave it in the hour of her life as wife and mother. She had long since armed her heart against persecution and even assassination. Her heart, devoured by a double passion, a love without weakness, and a despairing patriotism, showed her long since that in death she would find a refuge for her virtue, and a brilliant immortality for her name. In life she only regretted her child, in whose soul she saw the germ of her own talents, with stronger calmer reason to overrule her passions. She had true and sure friends to whom she could leave this mother's treasure. Tranquil on that score, she was ready for any event. The blood of another Lucretia did not terrify her imagination, provided that it stained the republican flag. With this resolution she sat down to write to Roland an account of the events of the day. Worn out with anxiety and fatigue, she had fallen asleep, when the members of the section forced her door open, and she was awoke suddenly by her servant. She got up, and at once understanding the fate that awaited her, she dressed properly, and made a parcel of the most necessary articles of clothing; as if to leave her home for ever. The sectionaries waited for her in the drawing-room. They presented the order of arrest from the Commune to her; she asked for a moment to write a note to a friend to inform him of her situation and recommend her child; they granted it; but the chief of the sectionaries having insisted on reading what she wrote, to know the name of her friend and his address, she tore it up

with indignation, preferring to disappear without farewell rather than denounce a friendship which would be construed into a crime for him whom she loved.

They took her at early dawn from her child and servants in tears. "How much you are beloved!" said with astonishment one of the sectionaries, who had never seen in this beautiful and sensible woman other than an odious party-chief. "It is because I love," answered Madame Roland, with tender pride.

She was thrown into a carriage surrounded with gens-d'armes. The people and the women in the street formed into a mob all the morning at the spectacle of her arrestation, followed the carriage screaming, "To the guillotine!" The crowd always like to see something fall. A commissionaire of the Commune asked Madame Roland if she would like the windows closed, to conceal her from the looks and cries. "No," said she, "oppressed innocence has no right to take the attitude of crime and shame; I do not fear the looks of good men, and I brave those of my enemies." "You have more character than many men," said the commissionaire, "you quietly wait for justice." "Justice!" replied she, "if there were any I should not be here! I shall go to the scaffold as I go to prison. I despise life." The prison doors closed over her.

The gaolers of the Abbaye softened her captivity as much as the prison walls would allow. There are beings who can only be persecuted from afar, beauty

softens all it approaches. They gave her, unknown to the commissionaires, a sunlit room. They brought her flowers; she loved to surround herself with them in the days of her happiness as the most divine and least costly of luxuries. They trained green creeping plants round the iron bars of her window, to allow her eyes, at least, by hiding the grating, to enjoy the illusions of liberty. They allowed a few friends to converse with her. They brought her books, those interviews that she sought with the greatest souls of antiquity. Peaceful concerning the safety of her husband, whom she knew to be with sure friends at Rouen; peaceful about her child, whom her friend M. Bosc, administrator of the Jardin des Plantes, had confided to Madame Creuzé de la Touche, mother by adoption; proud to suffer for liberty, happy to suffer for her friends, she felt a sort of voluptuous quietude of her sensations in the silence and solitude of her prison. Nature has placed a calm in the excess of misfortune like a soft couch at the bottom of an abyss, to soften the sensations of the unfortunate who fall. The certainty of not being able to fall lower, of defying men to push vengeance any farther, and the internal enjoyment of one's own courage place the patient beyond the reach of the executioner. Those three sentiments sustained at once Madame Roland's energies, they made of her own sufferings a glorious spectacle for her, of which she was at once the drama, the heroine, and the spectator.

She separated herself in thought from the world, from time, from her being, and lived beforehand entirely in posterity. Nothing modern or Christian

bent her soul to resignation or turned it towards heaven. Her distaste for superstition had weakened in her even faith in a present God and a future immortality. Antique woman in these Christian days, her virtue was as Roman as her opinions. Her providence was the opinion of men, her heaven was posterity. Of all the gods she only invoked the future. A sort of abstract and stoical duty, which is its own judge and recompense, held in her the place of hope, of consolation, and of piety. But her soul was so pure that this virtue, without reward, without proof, enabled her to stand firm in the face of adversity and before the scaffold.

No longer able to act, she collected her thoughts. By the help of her guards she obtained a few sheets of paper, some ink, and a pen, and she wrote in fragments her private and her public life. Every day she abstracted one of these sheets from her gaoler's watchfulness. She confided it to Bosc, who carried it away under his coat, and placed it in safety for a future time; it seemed to Madame Roland that she had thus saved a year of her life from death, and she robbed chaos of what she thought the better part of herself,—her souvenir. In these pages she mingled with the precipitation and disorder of a thought that knows no to-morrow the most feminine reveries of her childhood and the most lugubrious preoccupations of her captivity. You may see in the same book the young girl in the upper room of the Quai des Orfévres, aspiring to love and glory; a little farther, the captive in her cell, separated from her hus-

band, her child, her friend, picking off one by one the petals of her flowers of tenderness, illusions, hopes,—and waited for by the scaffold.

Nevertheless, although this book is addressed apparently to posterity, one feels by certain signs of intelligence,—one feels that it is addressed to an unknown confidant. Madame. Roland hoped that after her death a friendly eye would be enabled to read her soul, and find her allusions, sighs, and the revelations of her thoughts more clearly. These memoirs are a whispered conversation, of which the public hears nothing. They have another interest, it is a supreme interview, it is the farewell of a great soul. At every word one fears that the confidence may be interrupted by the executioner. One can imagine that the axe is suspended over the writer, ready to cut off her thought with her head.

These leisures of her captivity softened by evaporating them her feelings of sadness; the word is a vengeance; the indignation which is exhaled seems relieved. The captive at times seems to hope; she was even delivered for a few hours. Intoxicated with liberty, she flew to her home to kiss her child, to see once more the home of her interior life. This liberty of a day was only a trap laid by her persecutors. The satellites of the Commune watched her joy to poison it. They were waiting for her on her staircase. They did not even let her touch her own door, cross the threshold, hear her child's voice, see the tears her

servants were shedding. They arrested her, notwithstanding her prayers, and threw her, hardly escaped, into another house of detention, Sainte Pélagie, that sewer of vice into which the prostitutes of Paris were swept. They wanted to degrade her by the contact, and agonize her through her modesty. She was forced to live with these lost women. Their habits, their language, their moral leprosy, offended her eyes, her ears, her purity. She had accepted death, but they condemned her to infamy.

The compassion of her gaolers isolated her, at length, from this pollution. They gave her a room, a bed, a table. She began again to write her memoirs; she again saw her friends Bosc and Champagneux. Many of her friends, assiduous round her hearth in the time of her power, affected to forget her. Robespierre did not dare to withdraw one head from the people. However, the former friendship which had existed between M. and Madame Roland gave the captive an instant of hope, and almost of weakness. She was ill in the infirmary of the prison. A doctor, who called himself a friend of Robespierre, came to see her. He spoke of Robespierre. "Robespierre," said she, "I have known him and much esteemed him. I believed him a sincere and ardent friend to liberty. I fear to-day that he is fond of command and, perhaps, vengeance. I believe him susceptible of being influenced, easy to impassion, slow to give up his judgments, too easy to believe people guilty who do not share his opinions. I have seen much of him. Ask him to place his hand on his conscience

and tell you if he thinks any harm of me." This conversation suggested to her the idea of writing to Robespierre; she yielded to it and wrote.

The letter written, she tore it up.

She, however, kept the pieces as a trace of a thought of personal safety; sacrificed to her dignity of party-woman, and her sentiments of wife and friend. Robespierre did not have to decide between remorse and his popularity. The prisoner resigned herself to death. She filled up her leisures like the evening of a day that is ended,—with music, conversation, and books. From music she drew melancholy, in books she found strength to face her situation. She especially studied Tacitus, that sublime anatomist of great deaths, who points with his finger, on the corpses of so many victims, to the last pulsations of pain and heroism. She repeated the supplice with him, so to know it by heart, and represent it worthily at the supreme moment. She had thought of forestalling her execution. She procured poison. Just as she was about to drink it, she wrote to her husband to excuse herself for dying before him. "Forgive me, man worthy of the respect of the future, for disposing of a life that I had consecrated to you! Your misfortunes would have attached me to it had I been permitted to soften them. You only lose a useless object of agonizing uneasiness!" Then returning to the remembrance of her child; "Pardon me, dear child, young and tender girl," wrote she again; "you whose sweet image penetrates my maternal heart, and shocks my resolutions! Ah! no doubt I should

never have taken from you your guide if they had left her to you. Cruel men! have they any pity on innocence? You, my friends, turn your eyes and your cares towards my orphan! do not mourn over a resolution that ends my trials. You who knew me, you will not think it weakness or fear that has urged me to this step. If any one would assure me that before the Tribunal, where so many just appear, I should be able to point out the tyrants, I should like to appear there at this moment!"

One single, vague cry of invocation at this point left her soul, religion of the last sigh which, without knowing where it will be spent, seeks to exhale itself higher, farther than space. "Divinity! Supreme Being! Soul of the world! Principle of all I feel of good, of great, of immortal in me! Thou in whom I believe, because I must have emanated from something superior to what I see. I am about to unite myself to Thy essence!"

She made her will, and distributed between her child, her servants, and her friends, her piano, her harp, two rings that she particularly valued, her books, and the few articles of furniture of her cell, her only wealth. She then remembered her first passions, nature, the country, the sky. "Farewell," said she, "bright sun of my window, whose bright rays bring serenity to my soul, as they remind me of that in heaven! Adieu, peaceful country, on the borders of the Saône, whose spectacle has so often moved me. And you rustic inhabitants of Thisy, whose sweat I wiped away, whose misery I soft-

ened, whose sick I nursed! farewell, peaceful closets, where I fed my soul on truth, where I captivated my imagination with study, where I learnt in silence and meditation to command my senses, and despise vanity! Adieu, my daughter! remember thy mother! Thou art, without doubt, not reserved for such trials as mine. Adieu, darling child whom I suckled, and whom I would penetrate with all my sentiments!"

This thought overturned her resolution, the image of her child restrained her through her heart. She threw away the poison, and wished for her child's sake to have a few hours longer of trial and repentance for destiny; she resolved to await death.

The execution of the Girondins had thrown a shroud over life in the eyes of Madame Roland. Vergniaud, Brissot were gone. Who could tell what had been the fate of Buzot, Barbaroux, Louvet? They had perhaps already left the world.

They transferred her to the Conciergerie. Here she did not languish long. She seemed to grow as she approached death. Her soul, her language, her features took the solemnity of great destinies. During the few days she spent there she spread by her presence, among the numbers of prisoners in this house, an enthusiasm and defiance of death, which rallied those who were the most crushed. The neighbouring shadow of the guillotine seemed to heighten her beauty. The pains of her long captivity, the despairing but

calm sentiment of her situation, the tears restrained, but murmuring in every word, gave to her voice that bubbling of sentiments which rises from a profound heart.

She talked with the principal men of her party, who peopled the Conciergerie, at the grating, standing on a block of stone that stood a little above the floor of the court, her fingers interlaced in the bars of iron, which separated the cloister and the exterior. She had found her tribune in her prison, her auditory in her companions in death. She spoke with the fluency of Vergniaud, but with that bitterness of anger and that sharpness of scorn that the passion of a woman always adds to the eloquence of reasoning. Her revengeful memory plunged into the history of antiquity, to find images, analogies, and names capable of equalling those of the tyrants of the day. While her enemies were preparing her act of accusation a few feet above her head, her voice, like that of posterity, was murmuring in the vaults of the Conciergerie. She avenged her own death, and left them her hatred. She did not draw tears, she would not have them weep for herself, but she drew cries of admiration from the prisoners. They listened hours together, and parted, shouting, "Vive la Republique!" They did not calumniate liberty, but adored her even in the dungeons dug in her name.

But this woman, so magnanimous and so superior to her fate in public, sank, like the rest of human nature, in solitude and the silence of her cell. Her heroic soul became silent then, and allowed her

woman's heart to sink, and break as it fell from enthusiasm on reality. The higher she had risen, the harder the fall. Sometimes she would spend a whole morning leaning against the window, her forehead against the iron grating, looking at a bit of free sky, and weeping torrents of tears over the pots of flowers that the gaoler had placed on the sill. Of what was she thinking? Words, broken sentences in her last pages reveal it: of her child, of her husband, an old man, accustomed to her help, incapable of taking another step in life without her; of her youth vainly thirsting for love, consumed in the fire of political ambitions; of her friends, whose image followed her, and only made her regret life if they still lived, hope for death if they had gone before her to eternity. This she did not know: and it caused all her sufferings.

The interrogatory and trial of Madame Roland were only a repetition of the accusations against the Gironde. She was accused of being the wife of Roland, and the friend of his accomplices. She owned these crimes with glory.

She spoke of her husband with tenderness, of her friends with respect, with proud modesty of herself. Interrupted by the clamours of anger every time she wished to express her indignation, she became silent before the invectives of the audience. The people took a terrible part in the dialogue between the judges and the accused in those times. The people gave

leave to speak, or forbade it. The people commanded the sentence.

She heard her condemnation like a woman who with her death-warrant received her title to immortality; she rose slightly, bent to the judges, and with an expression of irony on her lips she said, "I thank you for having deemed me worthy of sharing the fate of the great men you have assassinated." She went down the stairs of the Conciergerie with a precipitation and lightness of steps that resembled that of a child hurrying for something it is anxious to possess; what she hurried to was death. As she passed through the corridors, before the prisoners grouped to see her, she looked at them smiling, and passed her hand transversely across her neck, to show the act of the knife cutting off a head.

It was her only adieu; tragical as her destiny, joyful as her deliverance. It was understood. Those men who did not weep for themselves wept over her.

Several carts full of victims dragged their load of condemned to the scaffold. She was made to get up the last, next to an old man, infirm and feeble, named Lamarche, formerly a director of a manufacture of assignats. She was dressed in white, a protestation of innocence with which she wished to strike the people. Her beautiful black hair, cut short behind her head, fell in front in long curls over her neck. Her complexion, calmed by long captivity, and animated by the sharp frosty air of November, had all the freshness of her childhood's years. Her eyes spoke, her physiognomy was shining with glory. Her lips hesitated

between pity and disdain. The mob insulted her with coarse epithets. "To the guillotine! to the guillotine!" screamed the women. "I am going," said she; "I shall be there in a moment, but those who send me there will soon follow me; I go innocent, they will come stained with blood; and you who applaud to-day will applaud then!" She sometimes turned away her head from these insults, and leaned with filial tenderness towards her companion in death. The old man wept. She spoke to him, and encouraged him to firmness, she even tried to enliven this funeral journey, and succeeded in making him smile.

A colossal statue of Liberty, made of clay like the liberty of the times, rose on the place where now stands the Obelisk. The scaffold was placed by the side of this statue. Arrived there, Madame Roland got down. At the moment when the executioner took her arms to make her get up on the scaffold, she did one of those acts of devotion which a woman's heart alone could contain and think of at such a moment. "I ask a favour of you, and it is not for me," said she, as she resisted the executioner, "grant it me." Then turning to the old man Lamarche, she said, "Go up first, my blood shed before your eyes would make you feel death twice, you must not have the pain of seeing my head fall." The executioner consented. Delicacy of a touching sensibility which forgets itself, and immolates itself to spare one minute of agony to an unknown old man, and which attests the coolness of heroism in death! How truly ought such a moment

to redeem the haste of opinions in the sight of God and of posterity!

After the execution of Lamarche, which she heard without turning pale, she stepped lightly up the steps of the scaffold, and bending towards the statue of Liberty, said, "O Liberty, Liberty, what crimes they commit in thy name!" she then gave herself up to the executioner, and her head fell into the basket.

ROLAND, on hearing of the execution of his wife, wished to die. He went out of the house where he had found hospitality for six months. He walked a great part of the night with a view to go as far as possible from those who had sheltered him, to efface any trace of himself and not to ruin those who would have saved him. At the dawn of day heaven and earth horrified him. He drew out a dagger from the head of his walking-stick, leaned the handle of it against an apple-tree on the road-side, and thus drove it into his heart. In the morning some shepherds found his inanimate body stretched in the ditch. A note was pinned to his coat bearing these words,—"Whoever thou mayest be, respect these remains, they are those of a virtuous man. On hearing of my wife's death, I could not remain another day in a world stained by so many crimes."

MIRABEAU.

ANCESTRY, at once the fountain of blood and of genius, is also the source from whence we must seek for the original interpretation of character. The family of Mirabeau was Etruscan. From generation to generation it retained in all its members not alone its Latin origin, but the patrician pride, the talent for oratory, the martial spirit, the Florentine imagination, the civilized tastes, the generous heart, and the ready hand of the noble races of republican Italy. The original name of the family was Arighetti, which became corrupted by a foreign language into Riquetti.

The Arighetti, being exiled from Florence by the proscription of the plebeian and patrician wars of that republic in the 12th century, removed their nobility and their possessions to the rocky regions of Provence. There they purchased land, built castles, made war, and exercised magisterial authority, obtained through the right of nationality. They intermarried with the

most aristocratic families of the country. From joining sometimes in the popular struggles of Marseilles, sometimes in the naval expeditions of the knights of Malta, sometimes in the wars and at the court of Louis XIV., the name of Riquetti—to which they added that of their Manor of Mirabeau, within the canal regions which border the Durance—became celebrated from century to century. From father to son, down to the grandfather of Mirabeau, every one of the family was distinguished for great heroism, peculiarity of customs, enterprise, intellect, and superior intelligence. One perceives in them the fellow-countrymen of Machiavel and of Dante, become French in their every-day life, but preserving in their memories, in love, in war, and in politics, the accent of their original tongue, and the fire of their southern sun. In re-reading the correspondence of that house, written in the blunt, powerful, out-of-date, but colossal and, so to say, cyclopean style of the ancient Etruscan language, one feels that Mirabeau's manner of expression is less his own than that of his ancestors. Nature vegetates during centuries to produce a man; but the sap, which when perfected bursts forth in such men, is seen from afar with all its characteristics in the veins of his forefathers.

Honoré de Mirabeau was the eldest of 11 children born to his father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, by his marriage with Geneviève de Vasson, the heiress of an ancient and wealthy family of Limousin. His

father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, a remarkable man with immeasurable pride and infatuated by chimeras, early left the military profession, and with wild enthusiasm gave himself up to the then problematical study of political economy. Thanks to a few sectarians, who overwhelmed him with adulation, he thoroughly believed himself to be the discoverer of a new truth, and the apostle of the happiness of the public. This truth consisted simply in a freer regulation of imposts and in trade, calculated to increase the net revenue from the lands, and in those frugal processes concerning alimentary consumption necessary to the increase of bread, the food of man. The invention of some economical methods of grinding corn, and in the refining of flour—inventions ostentatiously paraded in his works, and applied on his own estates, was set forth by him as a sort of humanized alchemy, which elevated its author to the rank of a Triptolemus or demi-god.

One sees that this science, all materialist in its aim, reduced the public bliss to a ration of provisions, more or less large, for each individual of the species, and that this philosophy, without loftiness, without morality, and without soul, was at bottom but an arithmetic of corn, of bread, and of revenue. It was more fitted for the fattening of brutes than the forming of men or disciplining a people.

But the charlatanism, more or less sincere, of the Marquis de Mirabeau made of this science a quack's secret for the wise, and panacea for the human race. Some from derision, others from conviction, freely

gave him Mirabeau's name, "*L'Ami des Hommes,*" from the title of one of his books so styled. He lived on the name in a kind of aureola created by the credulity of the ignorant, the obliging fanaticism of his adepts, and the perpetual infatuation of his own virtue. He was the type of that human hypocrisy that the philosophy of the age tended to substitute for the hypocrisy of religion, the cloak of which had been torn aside by Molière in his comedy of *Tartuffe.* Under either of these mantles might one claim the respect of men by nurturing with outward show all the perversities and all the weaknesses of a depraved heart. The friend of man, enveloped in his renown for philanthropy and humanity, made those two words re-echo again in all his writings. He sheltered himself as an idol beneath the sanctity of his principles; he intimidated the court and the ministers by the reputation of his manorial greatness; he curried favour with the people in his neighbourhood by seeking a popularity flattering to his pride. Whoever doubted his wisdom he made others look on as a blasphemer.

But beneath that wordy and commonplace philanthropy which alone had compassion for mankind in the aggregate, he hid a despot's heart, and the arbitrariness of a tyrant over his family. His compassion for the public seemed to him to compensate sufficiently for his domestic tyranny. In his dreams he made the happiness of the world, and in his actions the misery of those belonging to him; the influence his birth

procured for him at court; his fortune; his reputation for knowledge; his indirect flattery of the favourites, of the favourite Madame de Pompadour, enabled him to obtain authority from the ministry, and make use of the severity of the state for the oppression of his own family.

The thirst for celebrity, which he desired to cultivate at a less distance, the ambition of being raised by the voice of the people to the ministry; the interests of his sect, in short, had drawn him nearer to Paris. He left to one of his brothers—the bailiff of Mirabeau—the management of his Mirabeau estates in Provence. He established himself on his other property at Bignon, in the neighbourhood of Nemours, and occasionally at a country-house at Argenteuil, as being nearer still to Paris.

Domestic dissensions, which originated in the powerful influence gained over his heart by a foreign woman, Madame de Pailly, were the cause of separating him from his wife after their very fruitful union. Irritated by the tumultuous storms in his house raised by the legitimate jealousy of a degraded wife, he banished the Marchioness de Mirabeau to one of her own estates in Limousin. He deprived her of her children by driving her from under his roof, and to them he substituted his mistress for their mother. Unfounded accusations against the extravagance and the violence of the Marchioness armed him with the authority of the government over her. Bitter and constant lawsuits between the man and wife caused these dissensions to be noised abroad. They dishonoured

each other by their strife in these public recriminations. But his party and his popularity sheltered him. The oppressor was pitied, and people were exasperated against the oppressed. The world is oftimes the dupe of those who cry out the loudest.

THE Marquis de Mirabeau kept his motherless sons and daughters with him, and handed them over to the mercy of the woman who ruled in his house.

Whether it were antipathy for the mother that was reflected on the son, or the stigma that usually falls on a child if disfigured in its infancy by some cruel malady, or the repugnance of the favourite, Madame de Pailly, for the boy whose likeness to the Marchioness de Mirabeau was an incessant reproach to her, or that it was the unpremeditated but not uncommon hatred of an unnatural father for his heir who is one day to take his place in the management of his affairs, the Marquis showed a predictive aversion to his eldest son from his very cradle. He was born an outcast, he grew up in indifference, and he early discovered his father's dislike to him. In the unpublished letters of the Marquis de Mirabeau to his brother and confidant, the bailiff of the Mirabeau property, one sees traces of this foreshadowed enmity between the father and son from his very earliest years.

"I HAVE nothing to tell you of my prodigious son," writes his father a few months after the child's birth,

"except that he battles with his nurse." A year later he adds, "he is as ugly as a child of the devil." When the boy is five years old, he says, "he is as sand on which no impression remains. I have placed him in Poisson's hands, who is as devoted as a spaniel to me. Thank him much for the education he is giving the brat. Let him form him into a steady citizen, and that is all that is necessary. Possessing those qualities, he can make the pygmy race who play fine at court tremble!" .. .. : "To-night a little monster that they say is my son is to perform a part in a play; but were he the son of our greatest comedian he could not be a more perfect buffoon, mimic, and actor. His body increases, his chattering increases, his face grows marvellously ugly, ugly as if by preference and intent, and, further, he declaims perfectly at random. He is a sickly child; if it were necessary for me to produce another, where the devil should I find a pattern of the same material? He is turbulent, yet gentle and amenable, indeed so much so that it approaches to stupidity. Like Punch, all belly and all back, but very ready on the occasion to imitate the tortoise, presenting the shell, and allowing himself to be struck. This big, ungainly Gabriel goes about everywhere soliciting alms in order to give charity to beggars; following in that respect the example of his mother, notwithstanding all I say about its being contrary to my principles. The other day at one of those fêtes given at my house when races are run, and prizes won, he gained a hat, and then turning to a child who had a cap on, he put his own on him, saying to the little peasant, 'Here, take

it, I have not two heads!' That youth appeared to me then emperor of the world! I don't know what godlike expression passed over his face at the moment, but it haunted me in my dreams, and brought tears to my eyes. The lesson did me good."

And then a few days later, as if repenting of his emotion, the father wrote to his brother: "He has but just come into life, and yet profligacy is already perfected, the mind is distorted, fanciful, impetuous, harassing, leaning to wrong before being acquainted with it or being capable of committing it. A superb heart under a childish exterior, a wondrous pride, yet noble withal. A disconcerted embryo bully, who would demolish the world before he is 12 years of age! . . . . an unheard-of type of baseness, perfect insipidity, a rough grub, that will never change itself; yet with a memory, an aptitude, a capacity so precocious, that it amazes, surprises, terrifies one! . . . But the part of a man only, if he even ever becomes as much. It is only amongst those with animal tastes that such characters are found. There is a scum to all families."

Mirabeau, whose father's hate predicted and prepared him so bad a future, lived at the mercy of a servant and a monk; and under the rough discipline of a motherless home, and in presence of the disgrace of a father living with a nominal step-mother, whom,

whilst he detested her, he was obliged to flatter. The fortune of the Marquis de Mirabeau, though apparently large, was laden with such heavy charges for the family, so encumbered with debt, so diminished by law-suits and in outlays for his own aggrandisement and that of his party, that the place wore the appearance of decayed grandeur.

"With my refined notions and urbanity at which you always smile," wrote the Marquis of Mirabeau to a woman, the confidant of Madame de Pailly, his mistress, "I have here only brown bread, either soft or hard, muddy wine, cow-beef hash, water-cresses made into salad for roasts, withered grapes, mouldy nuts, and always quarrelling at table—which teaches me, however, to swallow my Provençal impatience—green wood, one candle for two of us to write at, and which flickers from civility for my window curtain, which gives it the signal by itself, blowing to and fro with the cold wind. And yet the place is beautiful. Truly the meadows and places have not the appearance of the month of May; the birds are hushed, the swallows are not yet ready to return, and the wild geese fly so high that they would not know how to distinguish a courtier from an honest man. Yet when peace reigns, the imagination gives to the fields more than winter takes from them; one can walk on dry green sward, one quickens one's steps without melting, and on one's return the fire with its fantastic shapes, having fagots for its foundation, logs of wood in the front and shavings at the back, sets humility aside, and is worth, let people say what they will, more than the sun. But the

world? people say. Well! Have I not my Capucin friar, to whom I yesterday explained that fleas, of which he seems the hot-bed, are very destructive to agriculture, as the time which is employed in catching them is so much lost to labour, that their beards are still more so, inasmuch as the dew from heaven, and the richness of the earth cling to it, and are thus turned from their rightful destination; and that our pockets which these beggars squeeze are, compared with the well-filled pockets of the 60 principal farmers,—what the lean kine were to the fat kine in Scripture. However, I can say no more; indeed, I say so much that I shall scorch myself in the end."

Passing from this to a pastoral scene, he describes the sleep of Madame de Pailly "unexpectedly disturbed, whilst reposing in her chamber," he says, "with a brow so clear that one could believe one saw the sleep of a good conscience." He is relating the history of one of those rural days of a popular lord of the manor, and he concludes by saying, with the conceit of one full of his own satisfaction, "every night on putting my hand on the first button preparatory to undressing, an idea takes possession of me and says, 'here is the end of one of the days given to thee—what hast thou done with it? There, Madame, is what I did with that of yesterday.'"

He goes back to his eldest son, Gabriel. "The eldest boy," he says to his correspondent, "might in plain French call himself a child unfortunately born.

As he now attends many masters, and that, from his confessor to his playmate, all give me information concerning him, I see the nature of the animal, and I have come to the conclusion no good will ever be made out of him. I ought to keep him, for he fears me, but no one else. However, I have other duties to fulfil to clear away the unmerited repute that providence escheated me, in paying me with the world's esteem."

He therefore sent Gabriel to the Academy at Angers, placing him under the care of a tutor named Segrais, as fatherly as he himself was not; but soon he regretted having placed him in such tender keeping. "You know," he wrote to his brother the agent, "the noble and almost chivalrous soul of Segrais, so opposite to the forward and grasping nature of that rascal. Segrais is captivated and fascinated with him, he praises the mind that can absorb all, without being able to understand, that sand also receives impressions, without, however, retaining any one of them. He magnifies the goodness of his heart, which is but weak and universal towards the lower class, who attach to it a spirit of meanness. He lauds his parrot-like mind; in short, he makes him perfect, and I am going there to see."

His father did in fact remove him from the happy home he had under the gentle control of his tutor, and placed him at a school of great severity, forbidding him to bear his name.

"The young gentleman," he says, "was very re-

fractory, he cried and argued, but to no purpose. I told him to win my home, and that I would not give it him back, but in good earnest." He forbade him all communication with his family, his mother, and even his grandfather. He learnt, however, that the mother's love had burst through this kind of prison bonds, and that she had succeeded in sending him some money. He was furious against both mother and son. "She is a plague that has pursued me for 20 years, and she now employs what I left her further to debauch the good-for-nothing member of my family."

From the age of 15, and therefore before any other crimes than the reflections cast on him on account of his plain looks and certain indications of genius, could serve as an excuse for such harshness, the Marquis de Mirabeau entertained thoughts of sending his son to pine or perish far from his native country. "I will drive away this pest of the place where he would dwell after me."

He gave in, however, with regret to solicitations that softened him. With his own consent Gabriel entered a regiment commanded by the Marquis de Lambert, the most rigid colonel in the army. "This young Marquis de Lambert," he says, "is of the stuff that men were made of in days of yore, whose breasts wore coats of mail; he says that by making a man breathe nothing but honour, you reconstruct his lungs. I doubt it, but he says he has examples of it."

He had barely entered that severe school of the

young French nobility, than Gabriel breathed the licentious habits and the boasted valour, then the only religion known to the soldier in those nurseries of vice and honour. His passions, no longer under his father's eye, broke out in a few trivial faults, that indulgence might well have pardoned; he played and lost a few pounds; he supplanted his colonel in the affections of a gunsmith's daughter, of Saintes, whose beauty had dazzled older eyes than his. Women, who have an instinctive appreciation of the greatness of heart in those they love, forgave him his ugliness, and found beneath his blemishes the real beauty of man—intelligence and feeling.

Love is almost the first to discover genius. The preference accorded to the young officer by the gunsmith's daughter was his whole crime.

The colonel treated his rival badly. Mirabeau, exasperated, fled to Paris, giving a promise of marriage to his lady love. His father, anxious to find him in the wrong, exaggerated his indiscretions into a crime, and talked of transporting him to Batavia, a Dutch colony; equal indeed to a condemnation of death, from the unhealthiness of its climate, and the impossibility of ever returning from it.

"See, brother," he wrote to the bailiff at Mirabeau, "if the deeds of that wretched being do not merit his exile from society! Sending him to the Dutch colonies is the best thing to be done with him. One is certain never to see the miserable creature again, who seems born for the disgrace of his family. The emissary who follows him, writes me word he is capable of anything."

This spy, under the denomination of a faithful servant, was one named Grévin, of whom the bailiff of Mirabeau himself said to his brother: "The man to whom you have intrusted your son, and who went by this (the castle of Mirabeau) is not fitted, and above all not worthy, to hold so important a post!"

Notwithstanding this, his father appeared to have faith in this informer, who was so closely attached to Gabriel, whom he had caused to be confined in the Island of Ré. "If he is condemned," he said, "he will be removed from there and transported to Surinam."

And whilst the Marquis de Mirabeau was thus acting harshly in intention against the first slight errors of his son, he was boasting in his letters to his brother of his forbearances, his good nature, and his paternal feelings.

"People generally fancy," he wrote to him, "by your venerable shorn head, your sedate and tranquil manner, your premature grey hair, and my title of elder —when you are known by sight and I only by reputation—that I ought to be venerable, for veneration is the courtesy I am treated with just now by those who write to me. But remember, and tell them, that I am a man of active habits who can walk round the Luxembourg in 17 minutes, that has not a white hair in his head, and who requires a looking-glass, or to be vexed 20 times a day, to call to mind that he is more than 20 years of age; the friend of all those who have never seen him; who neither by himself nor his reflection has ever crossed another man's path; who has never given cause for terror or perplexity to

any human being; who thoroughly believes that the duty of the age is to be lenient, to support all that is weak, and therefore to uphold youth, which may be understood and loved in a quarter of an hour."

The man who so spoke of himself rendered the colonel severe and harsh against the errors of his son, who begged permission to return to his regiment and make reparation for his faults. "It would only be," said his father to the Marquis de Lambert, "displacing the hammer from over the foolish, desperate, captive and infatuated lover, to cause a crash of another kind more fatal perhaps to his family. I know full well, that once let loose, before three months were over his head he would be shut up again for good."

However he consented to his being released from the fortress of Ré and join the Lorraine legion to make the campaign in Corsica under the command of Colonel Vioménil, afterwards created a marshal of France. "He embarks in three days," wrote his father, "on the smooth plain that ruffles itself, and God grant he may never show his face again."

In passing La Rochelle the young prisoner was insulted by an officer in his late regiment, and wounded him in a duel with swords. This mischance served to aggravate his faults in his father's eyes. He saw in him the Don Juan of his family. "He goes cursing, fighting, wounding, and committing such villany that

nothing ever equalled it. The scoundrel will escape the devil, of which he has a dozen in his body!" Whilst the father was thus describing the son, the young man himself, whose energies were displayed in valour and in love, won over, by his genial manners, always open and kindly, the captain and gaolers of the Island of Ré.

At length he arrived in Corsica; he united study with warfare; he distinguished himself in his engagements; he rendered himself eminent by his statistical and historical works on the Island; he gained the affection of his comrades, the good opinion of his leaders, and the approbation of the Marshal de Vaux, general-in-chief of the expedition. The war over, he obtained leave to embark at Toulon, and to go and see, in passing, his uncle, the bishop of Mirabeau, who had retired, as we have seen, to the old mansion of his fathers.

The bailiff, warned by the exaggerated accounts of his brother, expected to see a wild unruly fellow, but found instead the most accomplished and the most captivating of scholars. He took a fatherly affection for his nephew; he seemed to grow younger under his influence; his prejudices were removed, his austerity softened, and his family pride increased at the happy omen of so promising a youth. "Believe me," he wrote to his brother—'the friend of man'—"I believe him very repentant of his past faults; he appears to me to possess a tender heart. As to his head, I have already told you, the devil has not his equal. I repeat it, either he is the cleverest and most cunning

impostor in the world, or he will turn out one of the greatest men in Europe, a general either on land or sea, a minister, chancellor, or pope; in short, anything he chooses. You were some one at 20, but not half what he is. And myself, who without ever being anything great, was still something, I was not worthy of playing to him the part of a Strabon to a Democritus. I shall repeat it a thousand times to you, if that young man does not deceive me, I do not believe he will differ from the greatest of men except by circumstances. You know the steady judgment of my chaplain Castagny? Well! He opens his eyes and weeps for joy. As for myself, the youth opens my heart! . . . . What convinces me of the impartiality of my judgment is that I see some faults in him. For three days I have been with him 10 hours a day and the Abbé Castagny about 13, and I can swear to you, and the abbé also, that we have only seen a little impetuosity and warmth; but not a word which did not denote a true heart, an elevated mind, great genius, the whole perhaps somewhat superabundant."

"MISTRUST yourself," replied the father. "His grasping mind found itself at ease whilst with you uncontrolled, but mistrust yourself; hold yourself armed against his smooth words. For living at ease he is the best man in the world, but his head is nothing but a mill, incessantly in a whirl. His cool audacity will be a perfect fortune to him."

His father then forbade his continuing the military

profession. He desired his uncle to direct his studies towards the frugal labours of his own profession. Mirabeau murmured, but obeyed. He very soon fathomed the bottom of those empty chimeras, and the beauty of those theories to which his father would have enchained a mind at once impartial, active, and liberal. "Alas," he wrote at that period, when his natural impulse protested against the spirit of such a system, "what my fancy most inclines for is war; for there alone I am unruffled, calm, happy, without impetuosity, and I seem to grow under fire."

"He desires war," replied his self-willed father. "War! Let him tell me where there are armies of stockfish and herrings to be found! And does he fancy I have the means wherewith to supply him with battles as Harlequin did to Scaramouche? If he desires to bear my name, let him study my science to the very foundation. Tell that raw-boned cub to read '*Les Economiques.*' I wish to make an agriculturist of him." The son once more submitted; he entered, under the guidance of his uncle, with all the impetuosity of his nature, into the rural improvements on the Mirabeau estate.

"I AM perfectly satisfied," wrote his austere but good uncle, "if it were not that he uses in eight days my provision of paper for eight months. His head is still young, but full of activity and life; as yet I only see the verdure which, however, I believe will ripen into sap. I do not say his head is matured, but it is a

very strong one. He works himself up till he becomes excited, and then breaks out, but he comes round of his own accord, and listens to reason; he takes note of everything that is new; what I fear is, that nature has not allowed sufficient evaporation for the vapours of the impassioned mind of the youth, and the retention of it on all things has—so to speak—overloaded the furnace. I see a wonderful richness of imagination. He seems to me as if likely to become self-opinionated; and that is the more dangerous as it is impossible but what he must feel his superiority of talent over those older than himself as well as those of his own age. His head is a machine full of ideas and thoughts, many of which are very novel.

"You will find, as I have, that the oven is warm, very warm; but, dear brother, let us recall that age, and the excitability peculiar to our blood. All here amongst the lower classes, and my servants, love him.

"I saw by the reception given him by his comrades, and even the superior officers of his regiment, when passing near Mirabeau, that they loved and esteemed him much. He is terribly hasty, but kindly, and has the brain of three hundred thousand devils, and all say he is a good fellow. He leaves here the character of benevolence; the peasants say, 'he has compassion for everyone.' He is impetuous, but not haughty. The contrast between his childishness and his reflection, his ideas and his writings, is very singular; they seem to belong to two distinct ages. He has talent and, I think, ambition. In truth, he is at the age for that.

"I never saw a gipsy to whom the sun, the wind, the rain, or the hail caused less fear; he is like the barley loaf that every cupboard does for. He loves war.

"You will lead him back to your studies, though the subject is somewhat flat for one of his excitable temperament, but he is naturally diligent.. I have given him your notions and mine on the work, and told him that nothing will so steady life—which tries to escape so sadly and so purposelessly in idleness and pleasure—that the mind is preserved and purified, whilst, at the same time, one feels that the worthless matter within one is destroyed, and that one of the proofs of the immortality of the soul is the activity of a man's mind and spirit when advanced in life; it is only the shell that withers and dies, and that material portion with which it is burdened.

"In politics, if you attempt to fathom his ideas, you will find him thinking as I do; that is to say—by your leave—with a mania diametrically opposed to that which is held by your polite and mercenary writers in respect of the feudal order, the most powerful of Charlemagne's combinations. Your son views, as I do, a powerful aristocracy as the only body which can prevent a monarchy from becoming as an eastern despotism, for he feels that that respect belonging to races, of which there are several to be found amongst them, forming them into a kind of tribe, is the only one which will impress a prince and check a king; that is to say, a man who has been persuaded of his omnipotence by the most degraded portions of hu-

manity. I will not say more of that aristocracy so reviled by seditious plebeians worse than Claudius and Gracchus, except it be, that it is powerful, and they are pleased at being thought tyrannical; it is the only curb to despotism. It is on this subject your son is great and understood."

One sees under what a manly being, gentle but firm at the same time, young Mirabeau breathed the atmosphere of opposition to ministers, the independence of kings, and the pride and supremacy of his own race. Never, till his father's and uncle's time, had the disinterred Roman and Florentine diction been heard in Montaigne's tongue, a style peculiar to the family buried in their private correspondence, which Mirabeau himself occasionally recalled, but which he never equalled. His uncle and his father, unknown to themselves, steeped his genius in antiquity.

Recalled by his father in 1770, Mirabeau was employed by him in agricultural pursuits on his other estates at Limousin. "One must give him plenty of employment," wrote his father, "or what could be done with that hopeful and intellectual superabundance. For the rest I am on my guard with him, for I well know how on a miry foundation the elasticity of the brain can form illusions. And it is impossible that a well-regulated mind, a good heart, and a firm spirit, can expand under a coarse, ill-formed covering; but all this must be kneaded, manipulated, regulated, mortified! Besides, he would get over the devil; and

in that desert place at the end of the world in which he lives, he has already created for himself several pastimes. 'Admit, Sir Count,' said, yesterday, my servant to your nephew, 'that a body bearing such a head is very much to be pitied.' I am astonished at the amount of labour he takes on himself. He must be an agriculturist not to be ruined; a patriot not to be unworthy of his fathers; a man of the world to be in keeping with his position and fortune, and a studious man to satisfy his tastes and his talents. Add that he requires exercise almost constantly forced on him to escape the threats of Nephritis. Let us leave this rough fruit to ripen."

Partially reconciled, the young man returned to Bignon; his father then took him to Paris, and presented him at court. With a noble stateliness he approached the magnificence around him, in thought he was already superior to both kings and princes, whom he judged from the high standard of his nature and genius. Back again at Bignon, he resolved to regain at all costs the lost kindness of his father; he composed verses and plays for the amusement of the family. "My bird of prey," wrote his father, "addressing and grumbling at the same time, makes himself a barn-door fowl. The creature has established himself as the author of fêtes."

The peace was of short duration. The son who had returned to Paris to study under his father's philosophical friends again gave fresh umbrage.

"He works and hunts after old books like a maniac, as he does everything. His converse is laboured and fatiguing; there is an obstinacy, a firmness, a chaos in his head that will never be cleared. He doubts nothing, and does not even know for certain his own name. However, there is plenty of penetration and great ability. In the main, I fear the only success to hope for is to succeed in extinguishing him."

After a prolonged confinement on his Limousin property, where solitude and study had softened his temper and matured his intellect, his father sent him to Aix, at the earnest request of the bailiff of Mirabeau, in order to get him married. The bailiff of Mirabeau went to Malta, leaving his nephew to the chances of his passions and good luck. His boldness was rewarded.

A beautiful and wealthy heiress, 18 years of age, the only daughter of the Marquis de Marignan, and an object of ambition and rivalry to the richest gentlemen in the province, and engaged in turn to the Count de Valbelle and the Marquis de Lavalette, was on the eve of her marriage with the latter suitor when Mirabeau appeared. He conquered and declared himself; and by dint of intrigue, plausibility, and love, succeeded in having his rival dismissed; he fascinated the heart and obtained the hand of Mademoiselle de Marignan.

After having triumphed, he wished to dazzle. Reduced by his father to very slender means, which

contrasted with his name, and deprived as well of his wife's fortune, whose parents kept it for their own enjoyment, Mirabeau anticipated his future wealth by easily obtained loans. He covered his wife with ornaments and diamonds; he made his expenses equal to his rank. Soon besieged by creditors, he was obliged to fly. He retired with Madame de Mirabeau to the deserted family mansion of Mirabeau. There he made repairs, planted, and made expensive attempts at improvements, which served to run him still deeper in debt, and which alienated him more and more from his father. He was wrongfully accused by underlings of having cut down the paternal forests. An order to exile himself in the little town of Manosque sent him adrift from the paternal mansion. Indignant at so arbitrary and unmerited a banishment, he wrote his "Essay on Despotism," the first protest from his pen against a private tyranny, which became hereafter a political protestation against the tyranny of the government.

His father replied to this outcry of revolt by a prohibition, which deprived his son of the administration of his own property. The inquiry before the judge at Monasque ended by the most fruitless filial appeal to the tenderness and indulgence of his tyrant. A suspicion grounded on the infidelity of his wife's heart, who had imprudently received letters at Monasque from one of her former admirers, embittered Mirabeau's spirit; he forgave, however, and was silent. He did

more; he escaped from Monasque and went to Grasse, generously to further the marriage of his wife's seducer with the daughter of a rich family of the province. On his road he met another gentleman, the Baron de Moans, who had recently—at Grasse—insulted Mirabeau's sister, Madame de Cabris. Carried away by passion and honour, Mirabeau demanded satisfaction by a duel. The Baron de Moans refused to fight. Mirabeau revenged the insult to his sister and the refusal to himself by a bloody outrage.

Moans in his turn appealed to the laws for revenge. The action caused Mirabeau's disobedience to his arrest under the privy seal, which confined him to Monasque, to become known. His father and the minister made out an unpardonable crime against him for this trifle, the motive of which was honourable. He was torn away from his wife and his dying child, and he was thrown into the Château D'If, a walled rock in the roadstead of Marseilles; added to the solitude of this rock was the interdiction to communicate without, and the prohibition to write. In this hermetic sequestration, neither his uncle, the bailiff, who had returned from Malta, nor his wife, nor his sister, nor his brother were excepted. In the prison he was associated with vagabonds, the scum of the sea.

The governor of the Château D'If, less inexorable than his father, frustrated these harsh measures; he softened his isolation, and closed his eyes to some letter-writing and a few visitors. In touching epistles to the Marquis of Mirabeau, he interceded for the pardon of his prisoner, he was ready to bear witness

to his patience and repentance. "He has never given me," he wrote, "or any connected with the Château the least cause for complaint; he has borne with all possible forbearance the altercations I have sometimes raised with the view of sounding his impetuosity. He will carry away with him the esteem and friendship of the whole fortress."

His father remained deaf to these unbiassed entreaties.

But love, which was the bane and the comfort of Mirabeau's whole life, consoled him during his captivity. A woman in a servile position in life, but young and seductive, living in the fortress, was the wife of the suttler of the island; she became ensnared by her compassion for the innocent prisoner, and consented to fly with him. Their *liaison* became known by their flight, and caused Mirabeau to be accused of having advised the secret departure of the suttler's wife from her husband's home, and joined the infamy of abduction to the crime of love.

The accusation was a calumny, and the husband himself attested to the untruth of it. Notwithstanding, Mirabeau was transferred to the fortress of Joux, a state prison near to the little town of Pontartiers, on the frontiers of the Jura and Switzerland.

All indicated by the choice of this fortress, and the facility for the prisoner's escape from it into foreign countries, that there was a secret motive for tempting him to aggravate his faults by exiling himself of his own accord from his native land.

The Count de Saint-Mauris, a gentleman of an

illustrious house, commanded the fortress. "Be assured," wrote Mirabeau's father to his uncle the bailiff, who had gently remonstrated with him on his excess of severity, "be assured he is making the rope to hang himself with, and that before long he will end by a perpetual seclusion, in which I shall be well served."

"Alas," wrote the prisoner on his side to his uncle, the bailiff, "if I knew of a better heart and a wiser head than yours, or a being more sympathizing for his own, I would address myself to one so privileged, to ask my father at what period he thinks of putting an end to the really deplorable state I have pined in for so many years. It is for an unfortunate cause I have been imprisoned, but honourable in the main. Am I to give up all hope of causing a few trifling errors to be forgotten and of transmitting to my son a name which will not have lost, by one single error, the esteem that you and my father obtained for it. Raise me, then, condescend to raise me out of the terrible ferment I am in. Activity, which is capable of all things, becomes uncontrollable, and when it has neither aim nor employment it reverts back to us again, and may become dangerous. Do they wish to drive me mad or to frenzy? I feel my health is giving way; my hot head suffers more as I make efforts to control it. In another month snows will girt me within this wild country denuded of moral resources."

His uncle was touched, and communicated the lamentations to his father, and mediated by his insinuations as much as by his words.

"He feigns illness," his father replied to the bailiff. He accused the mother of his son of having sent fond messages to him in prison. "That wicked and good-for-nothing female," he wrote, "has succeeded in getting a letter to her son, notwithstanding his being under the bolt of the king and the law. But what can be done? It is impossible to un-marry or un-father oneself, and when the one will be at Salpêtrière,* and the other at the foot of the scaffold, neither will unbaptize themselves on that account. You see," he added, allowing the cause of his hatred to come out, "that I have an object in detaining him in prison; the fear he should come here and aid and abet his mother."

Mirabeau, who with gentleness might have been led, was thus driven, by the heartless brutality of his father either to hopeless resentment or the frenzy of a hardened heart. But his heart, not without dregs, yet free from venom, saved him from hatred and precipitated him into love. He was nearing the crisis of his life. The cause of his happiness and his ruin, lived, unknown to him, a few steps from his prison.

The Marquis de Monnier, an aged man of a noble and wealthy family in his province, and president at the Court of Public Accounts in Dôle, lived in the small town of Pontarlier, which the fortress of Joux commanded. This old man was 75 years of age, and led an irreproachable life; austere in habits,

* The Bridewell of Paris.

scrupulous in piety, but narrow-minded, obstinate, and vindictive; he had a few years before this period unhappily caused his name and the dishonour of his hearth to be miserably noised abroad by a scandalous lawsuit, and in discussions given over to the malignity of the public.

His only daughter by a first marriage, 16 years of age, was captivated, unknown to her parents, by a young musketeer, a gentleman of her own province, named M. de Valdaleon. Nocturnal scalings, aided by servants privy to their love, admitted the young man to the girl's apartment, where her mother also slept. A sleepless night caused her mother to surprise them in one of these interviews; M. de Valdaleon escaped by a window, and got away from the pursuit of the servants, who were imprudently made acquainted by the mother with the dishonour of her daughter.

Mademoiselle de Monnier, delivered over to the notoriety of disgrace by her parents, was placed in a convent, and her seducer prosecuted before the courts of justice. The two lovers, true to their affection, sustained actions against M. and Madame de Monnier, in which the talent of their counsels, the drama of an intrigue, the passionate love and misfortune of the victims, the inflexibility of the father and mother had increased the public excitement. They ended by softening their judges, and in getting married notwithstanding the resistance of the offended parents.

Madame de Monnier was now dead. The Marquis de Monnier, still embittered against his daughter and son-in-law, decided at least to deprive them of his pro-

perty, and married again at an age when marriage promised more of revenge than domestic happiness.

He married Sophie de Ruffey, daughter of a president of the Dijon parliament, and one of the principal families of Bourgogne. The Marquis de Ruffey was a literary man, and friend of the great writer Buffon.

Sophie, predestined to the couch of an old man, ought at the age of 16 to have married M. de Buffon, then more than 65 years of age. The talent and the beauty of that great man had obliterated in Sophie's eyes the disproportion of age. She desired this union, but family circumstances had broken off the engagement.

"I consoled myself," she wrote, "because he attributed love to a coarse gratification of the senses, and I only saw a happy union of spirits. These materialist doctrines remove my attraction for old men."

Notwithstanding, the Ruffey family gave her to the Marquis de Monnier, 10 years older then M. de Buffon, and who did not, like the philosopher, redeem his old age by his immortality.

Sophie, now become Marchioness de Monnier, lived for four years—miserable but irreproachable—a solitary and antiquated life with her husband; at one time on his Bourgogne estates, at another in the little town of Pontarlier, where the Marquis de Monnier reigned by virtue of his rank, fortune, and the respect of the province.

The youth, the grace, the gentleness, and the intel-

lect of his wife, brightened his advanced years and gave life, gaiety, and attraction to his house. He loved her with that jealous love which fears losing what it only possesses through a freak of nature. That love more paternal than conjugal had borne him no fruits. Disappointed in his hopes of depriving Madame de Valdaleon of her inheritance by the birth of a son, he concentrated his entire affections on Sophie; and he sometimes granted her more liberty and more power in his house that could have been expected from an old man who was guarding his treasure. Sophie was born to be the idol of eyes, but above all of hearts, of every age. Portraits and family traditions, preserved in the house of the author of this history—which Sophie Monnier inhabited for several months at the beginning of her sorrows—enables us to give great fidelity to our sketch.

Sophie de Monnier was not one of those resplendent beauties that dazzle the eye in the distance; she was one of those choice beauties that attract and then perpetuate a passion. She only opened, so to speak, as the modest flower, leaf by leaf, but once fully expanded and visible to the eye, nothing equalled the resplendency and irradiation of her face. Fair, yet with that glowing complexion almost golden, reflecting the sun like a metal, that shimmering colour of her hair casting around the recollection of her features a glory of fire; her lofty and rounded brow full of thought; her deep blue eyes somewhat prominent beneath the lids, her

nose short, and raised her chiselled lips; her mouth generally slightly open; her cheeks tinged with youth; her soft and downy skin, the rich possession of pure blood; her throat long and undulating, bending gracefully, as the osier knot when beneath the back; her figure soft and flexible, yet with a firm stature and well-set; her arms, hands, and feet modelled by a generous nature with the prodigality of matter which added strength to grace and which overshadowed a keen whiteness with carnation: such was Sophie at the age when she first appeared to Mirabeau. A mien that formed a real bait to a man who only sought in a woman the sensual attraction of love.

But her most powerful charm lay in her mind. Turn by turn the spirit was veiled or it burst forth through her countenance: the countenance, that mute language, spoke, in every feature of her face and in every attitude of her body, to those who knew how to read it, and revealed in the young wife a seriousness of thought and a strong heart in which the stirring of it could never be a trifle, but a passion. There was nothing young in her but her age, nothing feminine in her but her appearance. Reflective, meditative, and thoughtful, she caused those who saw her thus dreaming, involuntarily to dream themselves. She stooped by the gentleness and serenity of her disposition to the momentary enjoyments of her sex, but those pleasures were but the passing bubbles of her age. Her soul, like deep water, that ripples on the surface, was still at

the bottom. The force of her feelings, as much as the austerity of her life, passed in the society of an old man, preserved her from all vain desires to please and against the useless captivation of the eye. Her heart was slow to be stirred, but if ever it came to pass that it was moved, one felt it would never be at rest again but in death. Her cold, impenetrable nature resembled those incombustible metals with close pores that heat with difficulty by a gentle warmth, but which, once heated by an ardent and continuous flame, never cool again but in breaking. Her retired, objectless, monotonous life, passed in solitude and devotional exercises, commanded by the age and piety of her old husband, had never presented to her in her weariness and in her dreams the spark that was to set it on fire.

The Count de Saint-Mauris, commander of the fortress of Joux, and a friend of M. de Monnier, visited his house; and though at an age which forbade him the hope of captivating, he could not deny himself a certain hope of interesting Madame de Monnier by the ardour and servility of a tardy passion. Mirabeau's ugliness reassured the commander against rivalry.

THE coronation fêtes of Louis XVI. being celebrated at Pontarlier as well as everywhere else in France, obliged M. de Saint-Mauris to have recourse to the ability of his young prisoner to write an account of the civil and military ceremonies over which he had presided as commandant of the place. Mirabeau wrote a few pages, which were printed at Geneva

under the supervision of M. de Saint-Mauris, on the religious consecration of kings and on the solemnities which had associated the hearts of the people of the Jura with the public rejoicing. The commandant, gratified and grateful, allowed his prisoner to leave his dungeon in the town, and himself introduced him into the Marquis de Monnier's society as a guest rendered interesting by his misfortunes.

Mirabeau's genius, which beautified his outward ugliness, the fire which burst forth from his eyes, his youth and vigour, the manliness of his mind, the musical vibration of his lightest word which stirred the heart of woman as it afterwards stirred the soul of assemblies, the gracefulness of his delivery, the variety and depth of his knowledge at an age which captivity had matured, the unmerited persecution of his father, the forgetfulness of his wife, his trifling errors, his premature misfortunes, his condemnation from dungeon to dungeon, his isolation in that eagle's nest, buried amidst the hoary frosts and clouds at the summit of the Jura rocks, even to the renown of his daring and perverseness which belied his open and genial countenance, but which left to the allured and abashed imagination of a young woman the charm and the danger of penetrating a mystery and sounding an abyss, completely fascinated Sophie.

Mirabeau on his side, overflowing with ardour, always made to retrograde by the harshness of his parents, cultivated by solitude, soured by injustice,

softened by adversity, was charmed at the same moment by the beauty, the heart, the intellect, the unexpected interest which for him became an exquisite sympathy, and a temptation but badly contended with in the heart of a manifest providence under the angelic form of a young and gentle friend, he at length felt a passion arise within him which took possession of his mind and his senses at the same time. Hitherto he had felt but desire, now he felt love. That love which reflected back as the glimmering light of a flame from one heart to the other, soon consumed those two lives.

The long resistance which Sophie's virtues made against this love, the respect of her lover, the name of friendship under which they strove to conceal from themselves their mutual attraction towards each other, only served to concentrate in their hearts the bursting forth of their reciprocal delirium. The want of foresight or the paternal affability of M. de Monnier left the most unsuspicious liberty to their dangerous companionship, the rivalry of M. de Saint-Mauris added the jeopardy of secrecy to that of intimacy. Mirabeau's letters set Sophie's soul on fire, and he himself felt transformed by the fire he had kindled in another being.

"I SOUGHT a comforter," he wrote, "and what comforter is there more exquisite than love? Up to this I never knew but an intrigue which is not love; it is but the illusion and profanation of love. Oh, the

spiritless passion compared with that which began to caress me! I have the good points and the faults of my nature. If it makes me vehement and impetuous, it also creates the heart of fire which nourishes my inexhaustible tenderness; it makes me burn with that precious and fatal susceptibility which gives rise to fine conceptions, to deep impressions, great talents, great successes, but too often to great faults and great sorrows. It was no longer that violent transport of nature towards sensual voluptuousness driving me on, it was not even the desire of pleasing a judge of refined taste which incited me. I felt too much to have any self-love. The conformity of situation, the similarity of thought, the analogy of sadness, the reciprocal desire for intimate companionship, the charm of a confidant, that one almost invariably subdues more than one is subdued, hardly entered into my views: more powerful attractions had stirred my heart. I found a woman very unlike myself by all the virtues of her nature without any of her defects. She is gentle, yet not indifferent or listless, as are most soft natures. She is impassioned, but not yielding; she is sympathetic, but her sympathy does not exclude either discernment or firmness. Alas! all the virtues are hers, all the faults mine! . . . I found that woman too adorable, too loving, I studied her too complacently, I pondered too much over that delicious meditation, I learnt what that soul was which nature's hand had formed in a moment of magnificence, and she concentrated all the scattered rays of my burning sensibility!"

One seems to be reading a stanza of Dante's, when the mystical poet relates—excusing it—the fall of Francesco de Rimini and her lover.

Mirabeau and Sophie yielded as they did. Like them, they precipitated themselves from the heaven of innocent love into the abyss of guilty love; so as not to fall, one without the other, into error or even atonement.

THE consequences of this error were sudden and terrible. The town, jealous of the happiness of the two lovers, and more vigilant over the husband's honour than he was himself, began to murmur. The Count de Saint-Mauris provoked these whispers by his personal rivalry. He confined his prisoner more closely, and made him atone for his happiness by tortures. He asked for an order to forbid him in future going into the town of Pontarlier, he had the Grammont tower prepared for him, a dungeon celebrated in the fortress for the horror of its situation and the severity of its abode. Mirabeau, warned, asked of his father the favour of being chained, to remove from him the temptation of revenging himself on his jailer. Sophie's entreaties appeased him, and decided him on preventing the ill usage and the separation by a flight into Switzerland, where she would join him without delay.

Mirabeau escaped, but instead of escaping into Switzerland, he hid himself in the town of Pontarlier, where the facilities of a clandestine intercourse and

the charms of Madame de Monnier retained him. The rumour of his residence in Pontarlier and his interviews with Sophie spread again in the province. The Ruffey family, to remove her out of the country, sent for her to Dijon. Mirabeau followed her secretly. Their intercourse, suspected and watched, became known. Mirabeau, arrested by order of the king, was imprisoned in the Château of Dijon. Sophie, separated from Mirabeau, returned to her husband at Pontarlier. The irresistible fascination of Mirabeau influenced those who guarded him at Dijon, as it had done at Joux and the Château D'If. M. de Montherol, commandant of the château at Dijon, a gentleman with a soldierly and feeling heart, could not help liking, pitying, and helping the young prisoner. He without scruple aided Mirabeau's correspondence with Madame de Monnier, his family, and the ministers; he himself wrote to M. de Malesherbes and the minister of war, to pardon his prisoner and obtain his freedom. He left him his liberty on parole in the town of Dijon.

Mirabeau took advantage of this door opened by M. de Montherol to escape into Switzerland. By concealing himself at Verrière, a hamlet in the Swiss mountains near Pontarlier, he was nearer to Sophie.

At the rumour of this flight the Ruffey family shut Sophie up within her home at Pontarlier in strict confinement. Despair and love caused the young wife to find accomplices amongst her servants for her correspondence with Mirabeau. She implored him to allow

her to sacrifice all for their re-union. In the night she scaled the walls of M. de Monnier's garden; and dressed as a man, under the protection of one guide, she ascended the mountains which separated Pontarlier from Switzerland, passed the frontiers, and at Verrière rejoined Mirabeau.

For some time they concealed their name and fault from the diligent seeking of their two families. They intoxicated themselves with solitude and dreams, but neither the one nor the other took to the stranger land the necessary means of existence. Switzerland offered neither security nor literary employment to Mirabeau. Poverty drove them to Holland.

MIRABEAU, still unknown to fame, or only known by the follies of his youth, magnanimously solicited employment from the wealthy booksellers of Holland, to whom the freedom of thought gave at that period the monopoly of publishing both political and philosophical writings. Repulsed at first, he ended by obtaining the impression of his "*Essai sur le Despotism;*" he worked day and night on all subjects to keep want from Sophie; he even prostituted his pen to those licentious libels with which the mercenary press of Holland at that time infected Europe. He bought his bread at the cost of purity. By dint of labour and his compliance as a hired author, he managed to live at Amsterdam in laborious mediocrity.

"How sad," he said, "our life would have been for ordinary lovers! What privation to any other

woman. How bitter would have been this needy life, which is borne with as much sweetness as gaiety! Study almost entirely occupied my time, and a man twice my age would have been less sedentary. I had at times moments of involuntary sadness and pre-occupation, but one of your smiles always brought back serenity to my face and peace to my heart."

"My friend," replied Sophie, "you denied yourself my presence for fear it would cause you to neglect your books! How often did you not tear yourself from my eyes for annoying work and tedious researches. Nothing was laborious to you when it in any way concerned Sophie!"

"Oh, father!" resumed Mirabeau, extenuating his fault by the confession he made of it to his father, "one hour of music refreshed me; and my adorable friend who, brought up and accustomed to wealth, was never so happy, so brave, so thoughtful, so even-tempered, so tender as in her poverty, brightened my existence; oh father, we do not resemble two foolish beings that a passing levity drove from their country!"

They lodged with a poor tradesman of Amsterdam, and lived the life of the hireling.

Mirabeau's mother, who alone knew the place of his retreat, implored him to redeem his fault and regain a position in France by separating himself from Sophie. He consented to all but deserting her. "I am bound" he replied, "by ties all the more sacred that they are repulsed by the world; nothing can loosen them in my

conscience and in my heart; I would rather be a street porter in Holland than fail a woman whom I have dragged to ruin, and who for me generously lost all."

"Do you remember," wrote Sophie on her side to those who entreated her to abandon the companion of her flight, and thus re-open to her her country, her family and her fortune, "do you remember the story of that Sabinus, who, under the reign of Vespasian, shut himself up with his wife in a vault? Their life, passed far from society, which detracts from happiness, resembles that which we lead in Amsterdam. They lived nine years in their dungeon, they gave birth to children who lived; they were arrested together, but they died together. Ah, they were happier than we are!"

M. DE MONNIER, however, instituted in France a suit against the seducer of his wife for abduction, and obtained a verdict against him condemning him to be beheaded. The decree was executed in effigy, and Mirabeau's portrait was nailed to the scaffold. Sophie, accounted less guilty, had her titles as daughter and wife wrested from her, and condemned to perpetual seclusion in a house for women of ill fame. The two guilty ones forgot these empty torments by continuing in the midst of an exile which they believed secure.

But the Marquis of Mirabeau acquired through the court of London a claim on Holland for the extradition of Mirabeau. He descended from his pedestal to satisfy his revenge, and leagued himself with the

despicable agents of the secret police in order to discover through them traces of Mirabeau and Sophie, and by treacherous means to carry them off. The cruel father blushed at his own manœuvre which degraded the blood of his race flowing in his veins. "Those people," he wrote to his brother, the bailiff, "wear, corrode, and burn the very pavement on which they walk and where I burn myself; I, whom they drag by the hair and the intestines to the gallows!"

The Ruffey family, on their part, offered a reward for the apprehension of their dishonoured daughter.

The snares set by the two families and put in motion by disguised government agents in Amsterdam, finally entrapped the two victims. They were cheated, allured, seized, and together, by open violence, taken to France. The Marquis de Mirabeau revelled in their misery, and regretted he had not been able to inflict severer punishment on them. "I would have wished that it had been possible to have delivered the scoundrel over to the Dutch," he wrote in his private unpublished papers to the bailiff of Mirabeau, "and have had him sent to the colonies from whence no one ever returns. I even used my influence with those in power touching an exile to the East Indies; the answer was, however, that was impossible for such young unmarried people. I have therefore had him shut up; my conscience, which I daily prove before God, tells me that independently of the crimes which he spreads like straw before the wind, his fate would finally end in his being broken on the wheel and bearing our name, and it was not to undergo that that our fore-fathers trans-

mitted it to us with its advantages; and that soon he would fall back on me and mine, with the full weight of his intrigue, his fatal talent, his age, his habits, his villany, the money of his dupes! . . . . Therefore, as far as he is concerned, my plan is firmly resolved on; it is that the authorities and myself alone shall know where he is, and that at my death a sealed letter will give the information to my successor. Believe me, brother, in Babylon, Antioch, and Paris, had there been forgiving fathers, there would have been but contemptible parents. And since the family tribunal no longer exists, one must have recourse for chastising criminal children to the barbarous despotism of arrest under the privy seal."

Then as if blushing at the contrast between his philanthropic doctrines and his tyrannical practices, he adds, "When I was so lauded I shrugged my shoulders, but when they desire to humiliate me my innermost feeling resists, and in him alone is centred the weight of the entire column of outer air! . . I know I am, if you are to believe them, the Nero of the age, that the women would treat me as Orpheus, and the lawyers as Romulus; but what does that matter to me? If I were sensitive to meddling, I should have been dead long since! what does it signify that they try to tear from me my helmet of honour, henceforth too hard and too full of scars for such blows to reach me? The public is not my judge, and as long as health and mind last I will be—since God has condemned me

to it—Radamanthus. As to the rest, I desired to gain my cause (against his wife) : it is gained. I wished to confine those fools (his wife and his daughter) : they are ! I desired to imprison that maniac : he is ! " A man—as his unhappy son said to him later—who attempted to govern all his children by terror, as if it were the blood of slaves that flowed in their veins.

At the very time he was exercising his unrelenting severity on all that surrounded him, "the Friend of Man" was describing in a pastoral style the out-of-door fêtes he was giving to the people on his estate. "And these people pay taxes ! " he wrote with a bombastic compassion. "And they would take their salt from them ! And they call despoiling the people governing them ! And they think to be able always to starve them with impunity ! Ah ! these thoughts are comforting to him who has passed his life in preaching the necessity of relieving the unfortunate ! To raise the barrier between oppression and revolt, to make the treaty of peace between the strong and the weak ! . . . ."

Sophie, torn from Mirabeau, and to escape a separation that to her seemed worse than death, attempted to poison herself. To prevent her committing suicide they allowed her to see Mirabeau again. They conducted them together to the gates of Paris.

Mirabeau was thrown into a dungeon at Vincennes.

Sophie, doomed to the infamous prison of Saint Pélagie, was shut up, out of pity for the child she bore in her womb, in a house of correction in the neighbourhood of Paris. They changed the names of the two prisoners, they strove to make both the one and the other lose all trace of their existence and their abode. But passion, more ingenious than the police, out-manœuvred in advance all their precautions against a correspondence. The very agents who were carrying out the harsh measures adopted by the two families, softened and touched with pity, were the instruments of communication between the captives. "They have taken my name from me," wrote Sophie to her accomplice, "I bear that of Sophie, a name you have made so dear to me. We are near Ménilmontant. My windows open on that suburb, but no one has seen it from the outside. The house is horrible, we are seven women in one room; I can only write in my bed behind my curtains, and even then I have to fear the least rustling of the paper revealing my occupation. I steep nails in vinegar to make rust and a yellow ink; I only live on the hope of your letters. I see facilities for escaping: the garden walls are not so high as those I scaled to join you in Switzerland, but if all were open, I would not go; for I could not fly to your cell; and where, without you, should I go? To receive your letters, if they put me in irons, I would kiss the chains at that price. Ah! how happy should we have been had we expired in bidding each other farewell! What a boon would that one render us, that would shorten our lives of the time we are no

longer to pass together! Yes, to bear my sufferings, I must often think of the promise I made you and my unborn child, but I bear them, I resist them; I am no longer ill; I should desire to be sick unto death, if I lived for myself alone. Perhaps I shall know how to regain my liberty, for there must be an end to everything. There! I say it to you, I say it to my torturers, patience! I shall not be condemned to live for ever! . . . ."

SOPHIE in her words alluded to the moment when she would bring into the world the fruits of their crime, conceived in exile.

That moment approached. The child was separated from her mother, and Madame de Monnier was shut up in a convent at Gien, to linger out a more respectable captivity. Mirabeau, whose place of confinement was unknown to all the world except his father, softened the hearts of the police administrators by his distress. "The system of the dungeon is so atrociously severe," he wrote to M. Lenoir and M. Boucher, his jailors and comforters at one and the same time, "that it is impossible but that I must perish in it if I remain much longer. No companionship, the door-keepers who attend on us are forbidden to stay in our cells longer than is necessary for bringing in our food, or to speak a word to us; one hour's walk out of the 24; face to face with sorrow; no books; no tools for manual work; everything that could divert, all consolation is torn from one with the

most ingenious barbarity. Can you understand a man, young and with mind standing a sort of life where his passions, his talents, his thoughts, his understanding, his feelings even the most worthy are all turned to his destruction?"

They at length told him of the birth of his daughter in the cell of Madame de Monnier, but they refused his seeing the child. "I would destroy all," he wrote by mysterious means to his mother. "I rebel against the world. At such moments I would make a holocaust of all that is not you and me, but unlike Jephthah, I would except my daughter."

That child of hopelessness did not live. The first severities of Mirabeau's imprisonment began to be softened; not by paternal indulgence, but through his letters, full of the despairing eloquence of a supplicant, inspiring M. Lenior, police administrator, and M. Boucher, who intervened between the prisoner and the government, with interest. They tolerated books, paper, study, even the correspondence with Sophie, unknown to both families.

Those letters, as often repeated as the hours of the day, as persevering as hope, as burning as the recollections of the past; as heart-rending as the cry of the victim on the scaffold, for two years of solitude intoxicated with delirium the craving soul of the prisoner.

This correspondence is one of the longest cries of agony, of passion, and sometimes of genius, that ever burst forth from the heart of man. Modesty was frequently wanting; because these letters are destined

to be effaced, as soon as written, by the burning tears of another captive like himself, and to die unknown, between the heart that wrote them and the heart that inspired them; but the imperishable fire of passion more often transforms the unchaste ardour of the senses into the purified fervency of the soul. Since the imperishable letters of Heloïse and Abelard, love never burst forth in the human tongue in a like manner. The obstinate strife of a lonely and thwarted passion, which endeavoured to pierce the walls of a prison and to communicate itself by words living and burning to the object of a love which he could no longer reach but through the imagination, would make a prisoner with the mind of Mirabeau invent by miracles of passion, miracles of language, and make him the most eloquent of men.

Solitude and persecution are almost always both the martyrdom and cradle of great intellectual faculties. They increase the powers — by concentrating them — a hundred fold. Man, in falling back on himself by the enforced reflection during long captivities, draws forth an energy of will capable afterwards of causing the insurrection of a whole world. The revolution, which had need in Mirabeau of an athletic intelligence, fortified him in the dungeons of Vincennes. His thoughts were revenged on his isolation and inaction by casting themselves on all matters, religious, political, and moral; to fathom all, and, at the right moment, to revive all. He was the Galileo

of Vincennes, meditating, in the intervals of his passion and torments, the transformation of the political systems of government.

But if persecution produced force, it is impossible not to see that it also produced vices. Wearied and overcome by solitude, he stooped to base inclinations to obtain his liberty. He wrote obscene letters, to procure by that infamous means some relief to Sophie's misery and privations. He lent his eloquence, anonymously, to his mother, in judiciary writings, which she published as his defence against his father, a sort of mental parricide that no resentment could excuse, and which he did not himself attempt to defend when his mind regained its clearness.

He humbled himself to his father in ironical supplications and adulation, which belied both his feelings and his honour. He negociated, without the participation of his victim, the abandonment and banishment of Sophie, who sacrificed herself for him at the price of her liberty. He flattered the aversions and fancies of his father to purchase at an evil cost his favour. He was released at last, thanks to these base concessions of character and heart.

THREE years' imprisonment had subdued him, yet more perverted than bettered him.

He was barely released when he was called on to reply to the accusation brought against him by the Monnier family, charging him with the capital crime of rape, and to restore himself to his position previous

to the condemnation of death pronounced against him by the parliament of Besançon.

He then threatened both the Ruffey and Monnier families with the notoriety of his name, the strength of his talents and the scandal of his disclosures. By dint of threats he ended in obtaining a compact which saved his head but which sullied his loyalty. Before all, however, he stipulated for Sophie's freedom and independence. But still sore from the bitter results of his adulterous passion, and longing for wealth, he, by another action, endeavoured to compel his own outraged wife to return to her conjugal home and resume his name.

He went to Provence to plead the cause himself; at one moment coaxing, at another attacking; he amazed the Marignan family by his legal proceedings; he excited himself to such an extent that he laid open to the world the mysteries of conjugal unions, and cast on his wife the reflection of dishonour. The courts of justice condemned him, and took from him a wife that he had himself tainted when reclaiming her. His father sent for him, and gave him back a sordid paternity, and conditionally at the price of securing his mother's silence, and making himself the publisher of his thrifty theories. His debts overwhelmed him, the results of his faults clung to him, disrespect was attached to his name; his infidelity, his neglect, the excesses of his life, deprived him at last of the esteem, and very soon, almost of the love, of Sophie.

M. de Monnier was dead. Sophie had her freedom. But haunted by the reports of the disgrace

Mirabeau had caused to fall upon her, and out of heart with her very life, Sophie remained of her own free will at the convent of Gien. A little house, contiguous to the monastery, which had been her prison, allowed of her living there in the society of the nuns and at the same time in the limited society of the world. Two priests, accustomed to attend the convent, endeavoured to take advantage of her misfortune, and their blustering attempts caused odious slanders against his victim to reach Mirabeau.

After Mirabeau's release and whilst under the watchful observance of his father, a secret interview with Madame de Monnier, aided by a nun in the convent of Gien, for the purpose of a mutual explanation, had for a moment reunited them. This explanation in the presence of the nun, who was both a witness and accomplice, was very painful, it was full of reproaches, accusations, temper, and tears: it was almost tragic.

After this interview Mirabeau and Sophie never met again. All correspondence ceased between these two lovers whose yearnings had once burst through the walls of Vincennes. Sophie, deceived and disgraced, longed only for death. Her heart, however, crushed but in part, revived at the intensity of a purer and more constant love of a gentleman of Gien, M. de Poterat. She found in him that perfect devotion she had vainly sought in Mirabeau. A speedy marriage was about to unite them, when death took

from her her last friend. M. de Poterat died in her arms; all she had ever loved in the world had been taken from her either by ingratitude or the grave. Her life, without a past and without a future, was nothing more to her than a bitter anguish. Her ardent nature, which had all the strength of passion, was yet devoid of resignation. Having paid the last sad duties to her intended husband, she dismissed, under vague pretexts, her friends and attendants; she burnt her letters; wrote with a cool head and steady hand her last wishes, and shutting herself up in an alcove, the doors of which she closed hermetically, she lighted the coal of self-destruction, and expired, clasping in her hands the portrait of the spouse she had just lost.

They found her dead, and as if wishing to provide against the chances of her own irresolution or repentance at the last moment, her feet were chained to the bedposts. So died that intrepid woman, who had experienced and inspired one of the most tragic passions of the age; victim of her own uncontrollable nature; but above all, victim of the uncontrollable nature, of the temper and ingratitude, of Mirabeau.

The good and austere bailiff of Mirabeau still from time to time received his nephew in retirement. At one moment indignant at his behaviour, the next softened by his repentance and fascinated by his brilliancy, he endeavoured for the honour of his house to unite the father and sons more indissolubly. He im-

plored his brother to quit Paris and return to Provence, and to resume once more the life and habits of his family.

"You, whose grandfather said a hundred years ago," he wrote, "that honour no longer exists but in castles; is it then your duty or your choice which makes you reside in Paris, the most infected horrible place, where the sun's says but serve to show the black smoke and foul reptiles, and inhaling the air of that mercenary capital where perspiration even corrodes and is pestilential; where you, who used to be a light, are contenting yourself with being a reflection; you were of no use, seeing your dislike and incapacity for servility, which is inherent to those people living at court or in towns, with painted faces, and hearts as false as the chattering of domestic birds; you have beautiful estates in Provence, they are profitless, your château is falling to pieces. Come back, I do not lose sight of your son Honoré, yet I cannot conscientiously tell you an untruth about him, he is much changed for the better; I will even tell you that it appears to me, he has the portion of brains wanting in us, and I believe the best, for we—you and I—are only fit to make dreamers and to form republics after the manner of Plato; I am therefore satisfied; however, where he is concerned I sleep with one eye open, though I believe I might close it."

His father did not follow the bailiff of Mirabeau's advice. He remained in Paris and at his seat in Bignon the same life, sectarian and proud, and ever hard and miserly towards his son.

MIRABEAU, left to depend on his own resources, which were insufficient for his necessities, no matter how moderate, sought the distinguishment of his name and the means of existence by venal works which were a disgrace to labour. His universal and untiring pen was, for the sake of money, used on all subjects, even base ones. At one time an anonymous pamphlet writer, at another a salaried publicist, very often a subordinate emissary in foreign countries, unrecognized by the ministry, sometimes a paid writer for financial companies against rival ones; his purchased eloquence gave him notoriety, bread, glory, and—contempt.

But this mixture of profits, ideas, finance, politics, literature, and diplomacy in the midst of which he moved gave him practice in controversy, and without his knowing it, predestined him for the tribune. The fearless audacity of a character which no longer possessed decorum because it no longer possessed anything worthy of being shielded, rendered him an object of suspicion to the most renowned pamphlet writers, and to the most trusted publicists of that period. At the first start he attacked Beaumarchais, and closed his mouth by an address worthy of the Philippics. He turned about, threatened and served M. de Calonne; he boldly tore from M. Necker, in financial matters, his popularity of speech, and profaned by his sarcasms the idol of public opinion. He allied himself with the English and Genevese writers—those precursors of novel things in administrations—in friendship, interests, and opinions; in politics he professed principles which de-

stroyed tyranny in advance, and financial doctrines which undermined monopolies.

Ministers counted with him; in their name he went to study both Holland and Prussia; he addressed counsels on liberty to the Dutch, and he wrote a bold book on the Prussian monarchy. Frederick the Great received him at Potsdam, and entertained him with the future of Europe; and he died, bequeathing him the prophecies of his own genius. He wandered without intermission from Germany to France; from France to Switzerland; from Switzerland to Holland; from Holland to London; from London to Paris, trying from one country to the other to escape the pursuit of his creditors; he carried with him everywhere the stigma of his vices, the renown of his talents, and the mystery of his numerous love affairs.

After his rupture with Madame de Monnier, Mirabeau seduced and carried off from a convent in Paris, which his relations with Holland had given him access to, a young Dutch girl of tender age and angelic beauty.

Her name was Harriet van Haren. She was the natural daughter of a Dutch publicist whom Mirabeau had visited during his exile in Amsterdam. Her father when dying left the orphan a moderate fortune. Alone in the world and exposed to all the snares laid to tempt innocence and beauty, she attached herself to Mirabeau with a recklessness and constancy which made her endure without complaint his poverty and wander-

ing life. From this clandestine union a son was born to Mirabeau. Brought up piously by his unhappy mother, and endowed with a portion of his father's capabilities without any of his vices; it was this son—without ever avowing his birth—that was one day to inherit all Mirabeau's papers and secrets, and throw a complete light on his memory.

The name of Madame de Nehra—being a transposition of the letters forming Haren—both hid and disclosed the paternal name of Mirabeau's friend. Madame de Nehra followed her seducer in all his travels, a voluntary slave and often victim to her love, her privations, and her talent. "I have a companion in my sorry lot," wrote Mirabeau at this period, making allusion to Madame de Nehra, "a charming, gentle, and devoted companion, whose beauty would certainly have enriched her, had her excellent natural qualities not opposed themselves to it. She is just what you saw her, beautiful, gentle, patient, even-tempered, brave, and imbued with that charm of sensitiveness which makes all endurable, even the sorrow she produces. You will see her angelic face, her penetrating sweetness, the magical seductiveness which surrounds her. I swear to you, my friend, I swear to you with all the sincerity of my soul, that I am far from equalling her, and that that being is of a high order by her tenderness, her refinement, and the desire to sacrifice herself for him she loves! . . . ."

MADAME DE NEHRA acted for him as confidential medium between him and his friends as well as his

enemies. She sounded the frame of mind of those men in power whose anger against him he had cause to fear; she softened his creditors by her gentle pleading; treated in his name with booksellers, touching the modest price of his writings, his sole resource; received the subsidy his labours were remunerated with, by the ministers; she always went first to feel the way, either opening the prison doors to him for debt, or bringing hope back to him. One ever finds, at the bottom of the misfortunes of a man of genius, a woman ready to support his courage, and temper his adversities.

"He travelled with his tribe," wrote Madame de Nehra when giving a description of Mirabeau's stormy and wandering life; "the tribe consisted of his friend, his son, and his favourite dog; in foreign towns he visited learned men, literary people, ministers, librarians, and sometimes adventurers." When by necessity he was separated from Madame de Nehra, he wrote letters to her, full at the same time of his studies on the laws of nations, his tenderness, and his misery.

"Preserve, and conceal my papers," he said to her, "as the ark of God; it is reported in Berlin and in Germany that I should run the greatest risks in returning to Paris. Write to me many letters daily, to reassure me of your health, as my cowardly enemies will not fail to spread abroad that I have deserted and perhaps killed the young and charming companion of my misfortunes. Oh! how happy should I be to rejoin you; these cruel absences teach me well

the value and necessity of your society, and how absurd it is to disturb one's inward happiness for the miserable illusion of the world."

And elsewhere, when returning to Prussia on a secret mission during the meeting of the Notables, Mirabeau wrote to Madame de Nehra who remained in Paris; "In crossing the superb country which surrounds Strasbourg, in contemplating from the summit of the Saverne hills the enchanting scenery on both banks of the Rhine which one discovers from that magnificent prospect, I felt that if the devil wished to tempt me, he would be cautious and avoid transporting me to a high mountain. Ambition left my heart; I said to myself, Ah! disabused of men, and of things, how happy might one be here, cultivating one's garden and living only for the woman one tenderly loves and one's son!"

He sometimes anticipated his glory in talking to her of his works, which were not carefully finished, owing to the necessary rapidity of their composition; but the people began to feel the strength of his ideas. "My friend," he wrote, "when the work which I send you appears, I shall be but thirty-eight years of age! I venture to predict, it will give me a name! It may also one day give my country some regret at having left a man, capable of such observation, unemployed! . . . ."

At length having finished this work on the Prussian Monarchy, he succeeded in selling it for a small sum

to Fauche-Boul, a bookseller of Neufchâtel. "I have the greatest desire," he said, "to show it to my friends and especially to the Abbé Perigord (since become the Prince de Talleyrand), whose eagle eye is intensely necessary to its perfection. Sound the ministers, the Archbishop of Brienne, and M. de Malesherbes as to whether it is safe for me to return to France. I am making haste, for the horizon is becoming black."

One perceives by this slight sketch of Mirabeau's youth, that nature, descent, blood, family, persecution, love, captivity, poverty, the incessant rebellion of the heart against society, and of genius against circumstances, the habit of intrigue, scandals, regrets, punishments, relapses, vices contracted, even against his innate honour, in the prostitution of a life often degraded, had prepared in him one of those men trained beforehand to the vices as well as the virtues of revolutions—who participate at the same time of the two-fold temperaments of Cicero and Catiline.

His mental powers, increased, strengthened, and rendered yielding by struggles so obstinate and by such varied exercise of his talent, had become elevated in him in proportion to the extent of the degradation of his character. His immorality, which had had such influence over his heart, had had none over his mind. His intellect was so lofty and so unalterable that the vapours of his passions did not ascend to his reason. The justice and power of his judgment preserved him from utopia, illusion, and sophism. He might be a

tribune by circumstances, but he was a statesman by the involuntary and supreme despotism that good sense exercised over him. That young man, still unknown, smiled with pity from the depths of his obscurity at the errors of ministers, the duplicity of factions, and even at the illusion of the people, and felt himself superior to that courtly world which bore down on him. He but waited for the opportunity to take his place. The States-general presented it to him.

MIRABEAU, but partially reconciled to his obdurate father, became an object of suspicion to his uncle, contemned by the ministers, who, since they had settled their account with him, thought they had the right of treating him as an inferior, driven back into Provence —by the *esprit de corps* of the nobility—where the odious action in connection with his wife had deservedly lost him the esteem of his own set, did not flatter himself that he would again find an election; but succeeding at last in getting the tacit and constrained consent of his father, he resolved to try all to seduce or subdue the nobility of Provence. "If they desire to prevent my getting to Provence," he wrote from Paris to one of his friends at Aix, "they must assassinate me as they did Gracchus."

"I have arrived," he wrote from his province several days after, "at the juncture of events really difficult and contrary. The people follow me with marks of confidence and enthusiasm, very imprudent

for their own cause, for they thus put the crowning point to the rage of the nobles who have all the convulsions of the expiring Turnus. These people will force me to become a tribune in spite of myself."

In this disposition he appeared at last at Aix on the 21st January, at the States Assembly of Provence. In order to remove him, the nobility raised the objection of his not holding any fief, an evidence of the qualification for a candidateship for the States-general in the country. He triumphed, but by intimidation. The nobility, humiliated at its defeat, were eagerly bent on at least preventing the election. He in vain showed the utmost moderation in his views. At this period he wrote to M. de Caraman, commandant of the province, and his friend,—"we shall never get the nobility to listen to reason, they are too knavish, too ignorant, and too avaricious. We shall not appease the people, their requests are too just; and their heads, heated beneath the Provençal sun, are too calcined." He strove in vain for some time to discipline and moderate the popular party, for whom he had declared himself, but of whom he feared the irrevocable scission with the other orders.

"I can do nothing," he wrote to his confidants; "the people have neither plan nor luminaries; they enrage themselves furiously against follies, where it is wrong, and they soften in a cowardly manner on the most important points, where it is right. Men are but foolish children; I endeavour in vain to rally them.

Willing slaves make more tyrants than tyrants make slaves; and none do the people so much harm as themselves."

At last, irritated by the dissensions amongst the three orders of the States of Provence—orders torn to pieces by the same divisions as those about to break forth in the States-general of the kingdom, he published an address in justification of his earlier speeches, which was the first outburst of that eloquence with which he was about to thunder down upon the aristocracy.

In order to curry favour with the people, and reunite the clergy to them, and to force the nobility to reflect, he said, "In all countries and in all ages, the aristocracy have ever inexorably pursued the friends of the people, and if, by what combination of circumstances I do not know, that one has been raised amongst themselves, it is at that one above all others they strike, eager as they always have been to inspire terror by the choice of their victim. Thus perished by the hand of the patricians the last of the Gracchi, but when reached by the mortal blow he threw dust towards heaven, bearing witness to avenging gods, and of that dust came forth Marius, Marius less great for having exterminated the Cimbri than for having crushed the aristocracy of the nobility in Rome! . . . .

"But you, communes! listen to him who carries your applause in his heart without being corrupted by

it; be firm, but not obstinate; courageous, but not riotous; free, but not undisciplined! For me, who in my public career have no fear but that of being in error, but who, enveloped in my conscience and armed by my principles, would brave the universe, whether my labours and my voice support you in the National Assembly, or that my good wishes alone attend you, useless clamour, injurious assertions, unrelenting threats, all the tumults, in a word,—dying prejudices would have no weight with me! . . . . And how would that one, the first amongst Frenchmen that openly professed his opinions on national affairs at a time when circumstances were much more urgent, and the task much more dangerous, stay now his civic course? No, outrage will not weary my constancy. I have been, I am, I will be to my grave the man of public liberty, the man of the constitution! Woe to the privileged classes, if amidst them it is the man of the people is to be rather than the nobles, for privileges end, but the people is eternal!"

At this eloquence, at the same time lyric and manly, the people felt he had a voice worthy of the cause; the nobility and the clergy trembled, and thought by a decree, under pretext that he only possessed in Provence privileged lands but no real fief, to impose silence on that voice and exclude Mirabeau from the States. This outrage but served to draw him closer to the hearts of the people. He could not satisfy the enthusiasm that besieged him. "It is at such a

pitch," he wrote at that period, "that during the night only can I work at public affairs. You know the saying of Cardinal Retz, the greatest perplexities of the chief of a party are found *in* his party!"

He was beset with satires by opposing parties, in proportion to his popularity in the Communes.

"In some of the pamphlets they compare me to a mad dog. 'If I am a mad dog,' I laughingly replied to the people, 'it is a capital reason for electing me, as despotism and prejudices will die by my bites!' And many heads are raised in my absence," he adds, "which if I am elected will bend down before me . . . . A strange and sad destiny is mine," he again wrote, when feeling himself crushed beneath domestic worries at the time he was raising up a people, "a strange destiny is mine, to be the mover of a revolution, yet always between the dunghill and the palace. My private affairs necessitate my travelling five hundred leagues in one month."

HAVING calmed his creditors by promises, he left, returning in time to follow up his candidateship. The triumph that met him on his return to Marseilles and along the whole way in Provence was uproarious, it was the wild ungovernable hope that the people, intoxicated by his talent, placed in him. The people felt he had wrested power from the nobles, and that together with Mirabeau they had conquered victory. The municipal officers of the towns through which he passed rushed forth to meet him, as they would some omnipotent

being. Whole populations threw civic crowns along his path, and gave him by anticipation the names of liberator of the people and father of the country.

"I see," he said, "how men have become slaves: enthusiastic gratitude has prostrated them beneath tyranny."

They wished to unharness the horses and themselves drag his carriage. The cannons re-echoed from hill to hill at his approach. Music and popular dances took place on the threshold of his house. The indignant nobles hid themselves to avoid being witnesses to the ovations offered to one they had cast out from amongst them, but that their country had adopted. Illuminations prolonged the civic festivities.

"Detest oppression as much as you love me, my friends," he said, falling into the arms of the multitude, "and you will no longer be oppressed."

The peasants assembled in masses beneath his wife's windows, who refused to see him. "*It is too fine a race,*" they cried, "*to let it die out in our Provence!*" A hundred thousand of the citizens left Marseilles and went to the Aix road, to form the whole town into a retinue, the day he came to canvass for votes.

The splendour of his entry into the capital of the south obliterated the recollections of royal entries. A riot having broken out a few days after, on the occasion of supplies, the commandant of Marseilles, unable to suppress it by force, implored Mirabeau — then

absent—to exercise his supremacy of enthusiasm over the province. His return, his voice, his measures, both conciliating and firm, became living laws, and restored the defeated authority. "You see," he wrote to Paris, "I have by rare good luck been successful. The aristocracy that I have saved but hate me the more."

Revenged by the people against the ostracism of the nobles, he was elected deputy of the Communes for the States-general. In spite of the hatred of his own class, who saw in him a Coriolanus of the aristocracy, who remembered having had in him a paid agent for their intrigues, in spite of the disesteem cast on his name by the irregularities and scandals of his life, he had from the very first a presentiment of his power. His nature—not in keeping with his haughty bearing to all who suspected him at court, in opinion, and in the Assembly—foretold to him the dominion that all the world was inclined to deny him, but that he was all the more resolved on conquering.

It is not our object here to describe the orator. We have done that in our "History of Constituents."

When the gift of thinking, of feeling, of portraying, and of transferring through all the senses into the soul of an assembled people the ideas, the feelings, the tremblings which one is oneself taken possession by, exists to such a degree in eloquence, then eloquence is no longer an art, it is a phenomenon, the outbursts of which history ought to consign to its annals, as it con-

signs the eruption of a volcano. There are speeches which date a period as much and more than battles, and which carry through centuries to come, with the name of an orator, not alone the glory of an army and a people, but the glory of the human race. The speech on bankruptcy, and two or three others of Mirabeau's in the Constituent Assembly, have that character of inspiration, perfection, and beauty, out of which are formed monuments of nature more than monuments of art or politics. They do not alone exalt a nation, the orator is the man, they exalt all mankind. One marvels, one congratulates and prides oneself on being of the same blood, the same flesh, and the same spirit as those beings who by genius create at any distance such a dazzlement; and one engraves another sign on the ladder of man's power to attest to future ages to what degree of sublimity human speech has raised itself, in such a country and on such a day. If crime and virtue form a portion of history, genius is also historic, and admiration elevates to virtue.

Mirabeau in his outbursts of eloquence, half inspired, half premeditated, proved himself a man of passion as well as a man of genius, and a statesman. He took, with a splendour which astounded the mediocrity and the envious, the only rank worthy of him in that congress of France—the first. In fact, in those days his talent was so dazzling and so convincing that he even screened the weaknesses and immoralities of his past life, and so had none but the jealous who slandered him. The man of passions was forgiven all, who could vindicate himself by so much glory.

It must be here stated, in order thoroughly to understand the impulse—at one moment violent, at another moderate and often ambiguous—that moved the great man of the revolution, that Mirabeau,—extreme sometimes in his words, when the energy and elocution of the orator surpassed the extent of the statesman's thought, or when the intoxication of applause made the tribune thirst for more instead of satiating him,—was far from being extreme in his opinions. The philosophical principles which animated him, and which he vowed to himself he would make prevail over the servitude, habits, and the inveterate superstitions of the people, had not in his great mind that blind and wild fanaticism which overthrows at hazard all that exists before it to make place for the absolute or the impossible.

His intellect controlled his passions; his historic and so to speak innate experience regulated and apportioned the application of his theories; he inquired into the cause of impediments, he covenanted with customs, he knew the important place the past—even though defective—occupies in the present and future of a nation. The enthusiasm which inspired him he did not even trust to as a lasting power; he knew that that enthusiasm which—like the boiling of water on the fire — raises momentarily a people above their natural level, when it cools lets them fall back below themselves. He wished to reconstruct by demolition; he felt, with the great majority of the nation at that

period, that the institutions imported from America into France by Lafayette, without root and without predecessors, were institutions too premature for ancient Europe,—that the important and almost unique place occupied by a throne for thirteen centuries, would, were it to disappear too soon, leave a blank, which would be filled up by anarchies, dictatorships, and despotism of the soldiery or the people. He neither believed in the pre-existing right nor in the everlastingness of monarchy, but he believed in its temporary necessity. He even loved the institution he loved, more through family traditions, aristocracy, and loyalty. He loved the family of the kings of his fathers; he would have been as happy to save them, as he was proud of destroying them, but he would only threaten to destroy them in order to make them feel their necessity for him to re-establish them. In principle he only asked of the revolution to transform the government of absolute power into a well-considered constitutional royalty; to open a way in the government—with a firm but not violent hand—for reason, liberty, ideas, philosophy, the talent of the superior men of the nation, represented by its most intelligent organs, and to secure by permanent but regular institutions those conquests of a passing revolution, and quickly over, such as the reign of human reason, the destruction of theocratical power and of aristocratic feudality,—a sovereign nation exercising its legislative power by an elective representation, and a king, invested with the entire executive power, governing, by the will of the public, for the well-being of all,

instead of governing in the name of a pretended divine possession, in the interest of the nobility and aristocracy, people as favourable to tyranny as revolt.

Such were Mirabeau's ideas on entering upon the revolution. They are found written in every shape, and in the daily outpourings of his genius, which time has given over to us. But passions have the same supreme power as ideas over men of fiery and sensual natures. His passions were not less monarchical than his opinions. The irregularities of his life, the immoralities of his youth, the clamorous but somewhat doubtful celebrity of his name, made him understand, by a stern sagacity of judgment over himself, that if he had sufficient eloquence for a ringleader, he had not sufficient virtue for a republican. He knew that the people even in their revolutionary popularity only attached themselves firmly to such names as flatter their instinctive honesty by a reputation for probity, disinterestedness, and even austerity, and who honour their attachment to their great tribunes. Mirabeau had none of these virtues so dear to the multitude, it was no longer permitted him even to be hypocritical. Vice—popular and pardonable, but still vice—breathed in his name, his sentiments, his entire life; he might be a useful demagogue, but he could no longer be a sincere tribune. He might be a Catiline but never a Gracchus. Robespierre and Pétion, sitting in the shade behind him, had this advantage of situation over him, that he did not yet suspect them. But he already per-

fectly understood that Necker, Bailly, and Lafayette had by that right the step in advance of him in the republic, and that, notwithstanding his natural and immeasurable superiority, he would be but secondary to these popular mediums. Ambitious, because of his private necessities which rendered fortune indispensable to him, the republic, which exists by disinterestedness, did not enrich him. Ambitious by the consciousness of his superiority, which pointed out quite another position to him than that of the first amongst subordinates, the republic which did not respect him offered him employment but of a secondary nature. A court only, and a court at bay, could fall back on him as its only chance of salvation; throw the veil of necessary indulgence in depraved hearts over his own depravity; ask light of him instead of principles; politics instead of disinterestedness; services instead of virtues; place him as a Richelieu or a Mazarin between it and the people, shower down honours and riches on him, and mould for him, under the difficulty of circumstances, an existence as grand as his genius. To be the tribune of a victorious people, or the prop of a conquered king, were Mirabeau's two dreams. In his imagination he was incessantly balancing between the one and the other. We have just seen what a wonderful correctness of opinion forced him to renounce the first of these dreams, and we are going to see what an inevitable declivity drew him towards the second. At this date he wrote to the Count de la Marck, his most intimate confidant, weighing well these two ideas of his soul, "*Ah! how the immorality of my youth injures*

the public cause!" The great part which he felt himself worthy of playing, of the fearless moderator of the people, and the independent and acknowledged adviser of the king, escaped from him in that cry, by the little esteem, on account of the past, he commanded from the people, and from the decency of the court which shrank from employing a minister so censured. He was therefore, in spite of himself, compelled by the merciless logic of his errors to be, during a long period, but an eloquent agitator, suspected of being for the people and a secret conspirator with the court. The deplorable position of so great a man in such circumstances, is the most forcible lesson on virtue that history can give to men of genius. Notwithstanding Mirabeau's ingenious sophism on the two morals, life is one; every one of our actions is, unknown to us, the consequence of another. A youth of disgrace brings forth badly a powerful maturity.

Mirabeau, brought to comprehend this, did not hesitate to bring his character and talent into subjection, and to bend beneath the fatality of his past life by indirect insinuations made against the court from the earliest times. He lowered himself still further; he pointed himself out to the ministers as a useful instrument in the assembly for the court. He offered them a secret connivance with their views,—not, without doubt, for the purpose of again betraying his own convictions, but in order to confound them with those of the king's council, and to become by their influence

the double organ, depending upon the exigencies of the assembly against the court, and on the secret directions of the court in the assembly. The duplicity and servility of acting such a part deteriorated beforehand from even his good intentions. The power of a popular orator, as of a servitor of the crown, lies in his absolute independence and disinterestedness. Honesty itself becomes dishonesty when it is bought and sold. Mirabeau weakened himself as a patriot, royalist, and orator by debasing the man. It has been attempted in writings to defend him by stating that he allowed himself to be paid in order to carry out his own opinions, and not for the purpose of selling them. Opinions which people allow themselves to be paid for cease to be opinions, and become but slavish dependencies. The opinions of republican or monarchical statesmen have no price, but that they cost these men not what they return them. In forgetting this, Mirabeau lost himself a second time to the people, the king, and himself. The degradation of this one single man became the ruin of liberty and monarchy; to such a degree is the destiny of a great man linked with the destiny of a great nation.

Mirabeau, some time before the troubles of France began, had met, in the military and aristocratic society of Paris, the Count de la Marck, Prince of Arenberg, colonel of the regiment of that name in the service of France. The Count of Arenberg, though of Belgian origin, was naturalized in France by territorial posses-

sions in French Flanders, and still more naturalized at the court by his alliance with Queen Marie Antoinette, to whom his father, the Duke of Arenberg, had, on the occasion of taking him to Paris at the marriage of that young princess with Louis XVI., especially recommended him. From that time the Count de la Marck had cultivated and merited the favour and confidence of the queen, by conformity to country and language that princesses removed from their own country to a foreign court are happy to see in those who recall to them their native land.

The Count de la Marck was nominated as Flemish deputy to the States-general. He was a man equal to his rank by his character and merits, having of aristocracy in him but the nobility of ideas, freedom of sentiments, the chivalry of courage, and elegance of manners, but yet borrowing from the ideas and opinions of his time all the principles, the enlightenment, and aspirations of liberty which are reconcileable with the honour and fidelity of a prince. He belonged to that European party, the choicest of all parties at that time, who wished to hold out to the people, from the height of thrones and the aristocracy, the hand of kings and the upper classes, and elevate them to liberty and equality by constitutional steps, and not by revolutionary breaches. Gifted by nature with clear-sightedness, an upright heart, an honest mind, the experienced knowledge of politics united itself in the Count de la Marck to the enthusiasm of a philosopher. He had besides a strong capability of admiring superiority of talent in others, and a kind of disinterested passion for his

own genius, as if it were a manifestation of the divinity on earth, whatever use men might make of the faculty. Extreme modesty and absence of ambition, distinguishing marks in his character, destroyed every germ of rivalry in him with the superior men of his time. Envy never altered the impartial reverence he professed for talent. He was one of those rare men that Providence sends into life to be interested spectators and consummate judges of the world's drama rather than one of its actors, and that it frequently places by the side of great performers to support them when falling, to uphold them when sinking, and to console them under reverses,—pure but indulgent characters, that even the weaknesses and vices in great men to whom they attach themselves do not discourage them from loving them.

Such was Prince Augustus d'Arenberg, then better known by the name of Count de la Marck.

On entering the National Assembly, he had, besides the excesses and immoralities of Mirabeau, the universal and legitimate prejudices caused by the evil reputation of the Marseilles deputy, a deserter of his own set and the chosen deputy of the Communes. But Mirabeau's first words in the tribune disclosed to the Count de la Marck a force of talent and a grandeur of genius which triumphed in an instant over his repugnance, and made him foresee the influence such a man must inevitably hold over the age he lived in, and made him forgive many errors in consideration of so

much superiority. We have already said that the Count de la Marck was one of those beings who experienced the necessity of loving what he admired. He approached Mirabeau without fearing his own fame would suffer by contact with the reputation of a man so ill-spoken of. The purity of his own character placed him beyond human estimation, and forearmed him against the suspicion of complicity with the vices or factions Mirabeau was then infected by. Mirabeau was touched by these advances, and grateful to the courage that prompted them. Their former social intercourse, but slight and occasional in times past, now became renewed and strengthened. Mirabeau required a friend worthy of esteem, who in his own eyes raised him above the despicable friendships to which the errors of his youth had degraded him. He gave himself up heart and soul to the noble and generous affection held out to him. He longed to reinstate himself through his friend. It was a few days after the sitting where Mirabeau had overthrown the plots of the court and arranged the threatening speech on the subject of sending back troops:—

"You are very dissatisfied with me, are you not?" he said, at his first political and confidential discussion with the Count de la Marck, whose attachment to the queen he was aware of. "Yes, I admit it," replied his new friend, "dissatisfied with you and many others." "If that is so," replied Mirabeau, "you ought also to be very much so with those who inhabit the castle. The vessel of state is beaten about by a most violent tempest, and there is no one at the

helm! I cannot get on with such people," he added, in speaking of M. Necker, and of the subordinate ministers by whom that pretentious cabinet was surrounded; "but rest quiet, I shall always get on with an aristocrat as pure and nobly-intentioned as yourself!" Then, giving way to expressions of uneasiness as to the king's fate and that of the monarchy, and his distrust of the incapacity and hindrance of M. Necker's government, he made Count de la Marck tremble at the sinister future he opened before him: he condemned the vanity, ignorance, indiscretions, and cowardice of the prime-minister, and proved that he was ashamed of having convoked the States General without having amongst them settled the reports of the orders of the state, forewarned the royal authority against their agitation and certain revolt, and without bringing them a vast and efficacious plan of finance, capable not only of covering a miserable deficit of fifty-four millions, but of tripling—by better subdividing the charges—the revenue of so rich a kingdom. He said such a result would be simple enough for a head strong in finance, and that knew the resources of France, but that M. Necker, who had nothing of the statesman in him but its importance, was unworthy the part that a stupid popularity, artificially gained, had assigned him. The Count de la Marck, who had never been deluded by the puffed-out, empty speeches of the prime minister, had never heard these blasphemies against the popular idol uttered with so much bitterness. He was convinced of it all: "But in the end," he asked mournfully of Mirabeau, and with a gentle

reproach, "at what pass do you expect to arrive at, with your inflammatory politics which you are letting loose both within the assembly and without?" "The fate of France is decided," exclaimed Mirabeau in a tone of sad but irremediable prediction; "the words, liberty, equality, national supremacy, representative government, taxes agreed to by the people, have resounded throughout the whole kingdom. They will never come out of that without a government more or less such that of England.

To that irrevocable doom, he added expressions of sad interest for the king and queen; he revealed from the depths of his heart such hidden sentiments, and regrets so monarchical, that the Count de la Marck asked how, with such deeply-rooted ideas, he gave his power to the side of men who were undermining the ancient basis of that monarchy. "It is not my fault," replied Mirabeau, with the candour of a ringleader who was grieved at being one, but who, without blushing, places his ambition above his honour, "it is not my fault if the imbecility of the court and ministers forces me, for my personal safety, to make myself the chief of the popular party. Why did they not know how to understand and appreciate me? The time has come," he continued, with the action of a champion who is displaying his muscles, in order that his strength may be judged,—"the time has come when men must be esteemed according to what they carry in that little space beneath the forehead between the two

eyebrows!" And he placed his finger firmly on the frontal bone, the seat of his genius and eloquence.

"You know," said La Marck to him seriously, "if any one appreciates your eloquence more highly than I do; but is there an eloquence that can rightly risk the calamities that yours will entail on a country?" "The day," replied Mirabeau, softening, and by a glimpse letting it be seen he could heal the wounds he had made, "the day on which the ministers of the king will consent to reason with me they will find me devoted to the royal cause and the monarchy."

This was evidently trafficking and bartering himself, by exacting, through perils yet in the distance, overpayment for his services. The Count de la Marck understood him, and resolved within himself to make the court take advantage of this opening. "But to what will the measures of the existing ministry tend?" he asked of his friend. "To the destruction of France," resolutely cried Mirabeau. "If they wish to save it, there is not an hour to lose in taking measures to do so. The system being pursued at the castle is absurd, mad! They abandon the assembly to itself, and then flatter themselves they will be able afterwards to subdue it by force or by M. Necker's empty, wordy talk, and so bring it back again; instead of which the government should form a party for itself, by rallying around it the names of those who have the power of ruling it, of dragging it after them, or appeasing it." This was pretty clearly pointing to himself.

Whether it was that the hint was not yet sufficiently clear to the Count de la Marck, or that the negociations Mirabeau hoped thus to open with the court did not proceed rapidly enough to keep pace with his corruptive tendencies, dining a few days after this conversation at the Count de la Marck's with the Duke de Lauzan, and a few other young nobleman of the popular party, Mirabeau, having been very reserved during the general conversation, just before retiring took the Count de la Marck aside, and said to him in an undertone, "let them know at the castle I am more for them than against them."

But as if the mediatorship of the Count de la Marck had not sufficed Mirabeau for establishing a prompt negociation with the court, he made a more direct attempt, and still more indiscreet, through one of his colleagues in the assembly, M. Malonet, whom he hardly knew but through the tribune.

At the closing of one of the sittings at which Malonet had spoken as a man who could not separate in his ideas the cause of the king from that of the people, and who reconciled constitutional liberty with representative liberty as each being necessary to the other, Mirabeau accosted and cordially congratulated his colleague. Malonet, surprised to find in the rational felicitations of the great tribune ideas similar to his own, urged him to resist, with all the power of his abilities, the excesses of the factions he had fomented to a pitch of revolt, and which now terrified him him-

self. "Those men," said Mirabeau, in speaking of Necker and Montmorin, "are suspicious of me. If they had confidence, one might be agreed." "But," replied Malonet, "in order to agree one must have communication. Have you any repugnance to the idea of meeting these ministers?" Mirabeau on the contrary manifested a great desire to confer with the prime minister. The interview suggested by Malonet brought these two adversaries together. Mirabeau went with the disposition to serve, Necker listened to him coldly and hardly answered him, and badly disguised the scorn he felt for his immorality; he treated the great but despised man as an intriguing and importunate underling, whose services are either contemned or summoned. Mirabeau, irritated, left with more mortification and revenge in his heart. The height of humiliation to a proud character is to have debased oneself without effect, by offering oneself without having been accepted. Not having been able to seduce the prime minister, there was nothing left for him but to hurl him downwards.

"If M. Necker," he wrote a few days after this interview, "had the shadow of character, he would become a Cardinal de Richelieu against the court; if the government had a shadow of capability, the king would declare himself democratical instead of letting the contrary be imagined. His minister and himself by their weak indecision would throw us into a civil war. They will verify with emulation Machiavel's

axiom: "all the evil in the world comes from people being not good enough or not wicked enough."

Repulsed on this side, Mirabeau, pressed by domestic necessities, which did not even leave him the patience of great ambition, turned again to his friend with still greater candour. He admitted that the inheritance of his father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, though amounting to fifty thousand francs a year in land, was entirely swallowed up by debt and mortgaged to the creditors; that public affairs, on which he spent all his thoughts and all his time, neither left him the leisure nor the freedom of mind necessary for having his numerous law-suits tried and his fortune cleared; that the demands on him were immense, and his penury disgraceful; that in the midst of the splendour and renown of his popularity, he frequently was without the necessaries of life, and he had not even the money requisite to pay a single servant. The Count de la Marck generously opened him his purse,—whilst waiting for the more abundant resources that Mirabeau was certain of being able to draw on shortly from the king's privy means,—and lost no time in speaking to M. de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux, and minister of justice, of the monarchical inclinations of his friend.

The Archbishop of Bordeaux, though a colleague of M. Necker's, was satisfied, by the first words spoken at their interview, that the vainglorious incapacity of M. Necker's politics was losing France, and that the king, in the distressing state of his influence in the assembly, would not find a more confidential ally, or an avowed

adviser more prudent, than the powerful tribune that offered himself. "But," he added, "as long as M. Necker remains in the ministry, one cannot hope for a reconciliation with Mirabeau of that kind, and I, if I attempted it, would only find myself baffled by the Prime Minister!" "What position then can I take?" sadly cried Mirabeau, on learning this refusal from the lips of the Count; "the government repels me, and I can only place myself in the midst of the opposition party, which is revolutionary, or risk losing my popularity, which is my only power!" The alternative kept his mind in suspense between the desperate part of tribune and the distant and uncertain part of Prime Minister,—a total ambiguity of parts which equally weakens one or the other connection in political men, in whom opinions and interests are balanced by a debased character.

But even in this indecision, Mirabeau could not, without a struggle, forsake his conscientiousness of mind, more stedfast in him than his conscientiousness of honesty, nor strike, without trembling, the last final blow against that monarchical government of which he always hoped one day to become the last support.

The Count de la Marck, at the instigation of his friend, harassed by the need of money more pressing than ever, made known to the queen the monarchical inclination of Mirabeau, and implored her thoroughly to believe that the seeming connection with the illustrious ringleader did not diminish his devotion to her-

self, but had, on the contrary, for its principal motive the desire and hope of succeeding in procuring the allegiance of the most dangerous of tribunes and the most powerful of allies.

The queen replied to the Count de la Marck, "I have never doubted your attachment, and when I heard you were united in friendship with Mirabeau, I thoroughly believed it was from good intentions. But you will never make anything of him, and as to what you think necessary on the part of the king's ministers in respect to him, I am not of your opinion. We shall never be so unfortunate, I think, as to be reduced to the painful extremity of having recourse to Mirabeau."

THAT proud and natural repulsion of Marie Antoinette for a man who had twice already, by gesture, designated her in the tribune to the vengeance of the people, to the disgrace of divorce, and perchance to the sword of the assassin, did not discourage the Count de la Marck from negociating the pacification of so powerful a friend of the court, nor Mirabeau himself from soliciting and trafficking for reconciliation. Harassed for the third time by his pecuniary embarrassments, harassed daily by the extravagances of his life, surrounded by a pack of factious underlings whose zeal he had to keep up,—secretaries, trusty publicists who prepared his speeches for him and whom he had to pay, and pernicious women whose fancies he had to gratify; thus at the same time purchasing popularity, intellect, and pleasure, he sank under the pressure of so many

wants. The Count de la Marck, a witness and confidant of his anguish, wishing to tear him from that penury, so bad a counsellor of genius, offered him the assistance of 1200f. a month, a sufficient sum for current expenses with his position as deputy, and advised him to postpone the liquidation of his enormous debts to the time when, free from political cares and enriched by a place worthy of his merits, he would no longer feel the pressure of bonds disgraceful to talent. Mirabeau accepted with tears of gratitude the noble dependence of friendship, without inquiring whether the gold which thus passed from the hands of his friend into his own was not already an advance of the gold from the court on which he had set his heart, and for which he was not to wait long before receiving more largely.

However, from that day he hesitated more than ever between the language of the tribune and the language of a defender of the monarchy, crying out, turn by turn, as chief ringleader of the people who applauded him, and then giving evidence of a secret understanding with the court, who but half comprehended him.

Whilst Mirabeau wavered between these contending parts which presented themselves to his ambition and his policy, the court itself wavered between despair and hope. The queen, less passive and less resigned than her husband, had mysterious conventicles around her, whose secrets she confided to the king. All these conversations and all these manœuvres were fated to turn the violence of the revolution against herself. To

buy public opinion by corrupting—with the Civil List funds—the most celebrated insurgents in Paris, and by secret subsidies to the principal orators, controllers of the decrees of the assembly, inspire underhand their speeches and their votes, reuniting them to the monarchy by ties hidden to the people, and make the Assembly itself give back to the king in the last articles of the constitution the fullness of executive power which would before long furnish him with the opportunity of regaining, if not the entire, at any rate a principal part, of the legislative authority, was a purely monarchical conspiracy which made no way at that period against the independency of the nation, and the only object of which was the propitiation of judgment, the forbearance of the Assembly, the safety of the king, and the obtaining, by contribution or corruption, conditions which were to constitute the power of royalty.

THE natural medium between the court and Mirabeau was, of course, the Count de la Marck. We have already stated that he wished to reconcile his feelings of enthusiasm and predilection for Mirabeau with his attachment to birth and admiration for the queen; by raising Mirabeau to the post of Prime Minister, he would give in him to the monarchy their most formidable adversary as their most powerful champion. On the 6th October, La Fayette completely gained the ascendancy—the perfidious vote of the assembly excluding all its own ministerial members in order to shut out Mirabeau. The anarchy of Paris, the ill-disguised

captivity of the king, Mirabeau's harangues, too little monarchical, had, for the time being, discouraged the Count de la Marck. He left for Brussels, and in the depths of the retreat of his estates in Brabant he contented himself by forgetting the agitation and troubles of France. His attachment to the queen could alone recall him. The Count de Mercy-Argenteau, the Emperor Joseph II.'s ambassador to his sister Marie Antoinette, the most influential of the political men acquainted with the individual notions of the queen, wrote, towards the end of February, 1790, to the Count de la Marck, saying his immediate presence in Paris was required for grave purposes. The Count de la Marck understood these purposes to concern the queen. He accordingly arrived in Paris. In order thoroughly to ascertain all concerning the intimate movements of the great actors in this historical drama, with but half-spoken scenes, it is necessary to hear their own expressions. We will therefore in this relation of Mirabeau's conquest or corruption let him and the Count de la Marck speak and write for themselves.

"The day following my arrival," wrote the Count de la Marck, in that great confidence communicated to history for the first time only after his death, "I went early in the morning to the Count de Mirabeau, and we passed the day together and alone. I found him more dissatisfied with everything and more discouraged than ever. When I left him, he told me that now it was with repugnance that

he occupied himself with public affairs, and that he rarely appeared in the tribune. And let it be well noted, this discouragement was caused by the aspect of public events, by the excitability of minds that were always clashing, by the visible progress of a furious and wild anarchy, by the weakening of all moral springs and essential authority, the perpetual vacillations of the king, and the incapability of the ministry. Mirabeau, who, with his eagle eye, saw all this, and the present and future, believed himself capable, and himself alone, of providing for the necessities of Europe; but he was repulsed and misunderstood. He felt that every day made the work of reconstruction more difficult, even for him, supposing he were called on to act, and that delays would render the evil absolutely incurable. Such were the causes of the dejection into which he had fallen, without any compensation to himself, his calculations, projects, ambitious hopes, or the anguish of his domestic position; which was, and which remained, painful and distressing; when, had he been less ruled by his principles, it would have sufficed him to let the gold the factions were lavishing in masses reach him. I saw, however, that he had not relinquished his former project of a personal reconciliation with the king; for the language he used to me formed a marked contrast to his speeches in the tribune, and the writings he published or caused to be published. The newspaper, *Le Courier de Provence,* though he was no longer its principal editor, still continued, nevertheless, at that period to express his ideas; all the articles were looked over by him, his speeches were reported word for word,

and they were not those of a man who despaired of the public cause. He desired to grasp power, to obtain the direction of affairs, but he could not follow the ordinary path; it was, on the contrary, by taking the one diametrically opposed that he hoped to obtain his end.

"The third day after my arrival I went to the Count de Mercy. I thought he was going to speak to me about the affairs of the Netherlands, but he did not say a word on the subject, and the conversation began thus: 'You are,' he said, 'intimately acquainted with the Count de Mirabeau?' 'Yes, Monsieur le Comte.' 'The king and queen who were aware of this intimacy thought by your sustaining it you imagined it would be of service to them.' 'They did not deceive themselves, besides the queen has been informed of it at various times.' 'Their Majesties have charged me to ask you your opinion as to the actual disposition you suppose M. de Mirabeau to be in?' 'The Count de Mirabeau imagined at the commencement of the States General, that the ministers of the crown would act as the English ministry does; that they would endeavour to form a government party and to re-attach those men most fitted by their talents, their learning, and their popularity to strengthen the party. At the opening of the States General the popular party was the one the general mass of opinion favoured. His calculations were wrong, and since that it has not rested with him to take up a better position; I mean such as would coincide with his opinions and principles. He has often expressed his regrets to me. He saw nothing but incapability

in the ministry, and he looked on M. Necker as the author of the present state of misery France is in, and of that she is destined still to suffer. Mirabeau wished the king to know of his desire to serve him; it is now more than five months since I informed Monsieur the king's brother, who did not think fit to acquaint His Majesty. Then I withdrew myself from this affair and left Paris, where I probably should not have returned but for the request you made me.'

"'Well,' said M. de Mercy, 'it is on this very subject we must enter. The king and queen are decided on reclaiming the Count de Mirabeau's services if he is disposed to be useful to them. They look to you to do what is necessary under these circumstances; their reliance, in that respect, is without reserve; they leave you master of the conditions and will have no communication with the Count but through your interposition. You will be their only medium. They expect the greatest secresy on your part, and you understand its importance. It is essential that M. Necker, with whom they are much displeased, should ignore this negotiation. The queen relies especially on you. We have been expecting you here for a month; it is because you did not arrive that I decided on writing to you.' 'Monsieur le Comte,' I replied, 'the evil already done is very serious, and I doubt if Mirabeau himself can remedy what they have permitted him to do.'

"I then stated to the Count de Mercy that I would only consent to be the medium in this negotiation if he himself took part in it, and that my first condition was, that he should hold a conversation with Mirabeau which

would place him in a position to judge him and learn his principles and inclinations.

"M. de Mercy hesitated in answering me on this point, and merely said he would acquaint the king with our interview, and then let me know the further orders of His Majesty. I saw well enough he feared compromising his character as ambassador in a matter of so much importance; but on my side I was firmly resolved only to bind myself conjointly with him and under his direction. On this we parted.

"More than a fortnight passed without my having any communication on the subject with M. de Mercy. It was in the beginning of the month of April that through the secretary of the embassy, M. de Blumendorf, he requested me to call on him. I went. The ambassador spoke to me first of the scruples he entertained of meddling in a matter so completely apart from the position he occupied. I agreed that it was a delicate question, but notwithstanding, I repeated, nothing would make me depart from my resolution. M. de Mercy ended by giving in, and then asked me how it would be possible to see Mirabeau without its being known, and where their interview could take place. I proposed my own house. I occupied the Hôtel Charost in the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré. The house had an outlet through the garden into the Champs Elysées. The principal part of my servants were foreigners, and those that were French were servants of long standing on whose discretion I could rely.

"It was then agreed the interview should take place in my house, where the Count de Mercy came as usual

in his carriage by the Rue Saint-Honoré, whilst Mirabeau came on foot by the Champs Elysées, entered by the garden door, of which I had given him the key, and came straight to my room, without passing through the ante-chamber where the servants were.

"After my conversation with M. de Mercy, I saw Mirabeau, and without entrusting to him all that passed between the Count and myself, I expressed to him the desire I had that he should make the acquaintance of M. de Mercy, whom I depicted as a man moderate and loyal, and with whom he could be explicit without reserve or after-thought. I made him understand that relations with this ambassador would certainly be a good means of inspiring confidence in the king and queen, and thus to arrive at the object he desired, the safety of the monarchy. Mirabeau accepted with eagerness my offer of his meeting with M. de Mercy at my house, and the conference took place as it had been arranged.

"After the first words of courtesy, the conversation at once turned on the important questions which preoccupied us all three. M. de Mercy soon touched on the delicate sides of these questions, and, after having drawn a rapid picture of the frightful advance day by day of the revolution and of the gulf France ere long would be plunged in, he addressed himself to Mirabeau and candidly told him he could not believe he would persist in compromising his talents and his genius by countenancing such tumults.

"Mirabeau, moved by this frankness, expressed himself on his side with great openness of heart. He

acknowledged the dangers of the situation, and ended by declaring that the only means of escaping from it was to make the king leave Paris but not France. He implored M. de Mercy, if he had the opportunity of seeing the king, to endeavour to convince His Majesty that, under the present circumstances, it was the only plan to follow.

"On this occasion M. de Mercy made no direct proposal to Mirabeau on the part of the king, and contented himself with saying he would not fail to make the best use of the conversation they had held.

"In this first interview Mirabeau and M. de Mercy formed a very favourable opinion of each other. Mirabeau told me that M. de Mercy appeared to him very superior to what he had heard of him, and in fact he did show great tact in the way he exposed the actual situation of affairs. M. de Mercy, on his part, deplored the many differences that had prevented their seeking so eminent a man, whom they had allowed to become dangerous when he might have been so useful. He told me, on leaving, that the king and queen desired to speak with me as soon as possible, and that the queen had charged him to tell me she would receive me the following day at one o'clock at the Tuileries, and in the apartment of Mme Thibaut, her principal waiting-woman, in order to excite less suspicion. I went.

"The queen began by telling me that since two months she, conjointly with the king, had resolved on a reconciliation with the Count de Mirabeau, and that they both had agreed, in order to attain this end, to

apply to me. She repeated to me again what she had said a few months previously; that she had never had the slightest doubt but what my relations with Mirabeau had for their sole object the welfare of the king. She then asked me with a certain accent of curiosity and embarrassment, if I did not think Mirabeau had had a hand in the horrors of the fifth and sixth October. I then assured her that he had partly spent those two days in my house, and that we were dining by ourselves when the arrival of the Paris mob at Versailles was announced. I added that I then had much wished the ministers of the crown could have heard the opinions that were expressed during our *tête-à-tête*, and, above all, they had known how to act on them.

"'You have given me great pleasure,' replied the queen, in a more re-assured tone; 'I had a great desire to be put right on this point; for I admit it was on account of the rumours that were current at the time that I entertained such a feeling of horror for the Count de Mirabeau, which contributed not a little to delay our determination of applying to him to stop, if possible, the terrible consequences of the revolution.'

"At that moment the king entered. Without having recourse to any preamble, and with his usual abruptness, he said: 'The queen will already have told you I wish to make use of the Count de Mirabeau, if you think it is his desire and within his power to be of service to me. What do you think in respect to this?'

"I candidly replied to the king that it was doing the thing very late, and that I could not help pointing

out to him the extreme unskilfulness of the ministers, who, from the very opening of the States General, ought, as they might easily have done, to have made those deputies enter into the interests of the king who were known by their talent, and who now had become the leaders of the revolutionary party. I told the king that Mirabeau himself had expected some such overture, but the ministers had disdained and repulsed him with haughty presumption which certainly was not justifiable on their part. I showed his majesty also, that it was not alone Mirabeau his ministers might have secured the support of, but many other deputies equally dangerous. I added that the evil was daily taking deeper root, and that the longer they delayed in attacking it the more difficult it would become to destroy.

"'Ah!' cried the king, 'there is nothing to hope for on that point with M. Necker. And, also, all that is done through M. Mirabeau must remain a profound secret to my ministers; I trust to you for that.'

"I was utterly confounded by this answer. I could not understand how the king could dream of employing —unknown to his ministers—such a man as Mirabeau. In fact, his advice and actions could not fail to be in complete opposition to those of the ministers, and what benefit could be expected from such inconsistency?

"'Now,' continued the king, 'how do you think Mirabeau can beneficially serve me?'

"I told the king I could not answer this question until I had conferred with Mirabeau.

"'See him, then, and you will tell the queen or myself what has been resolved on.'

"'Would you not prefer my asking the Count de Mirabeau, on the part of your majesty, to put in writing his ideas on that head?'

"'Yes, better still; and you will remit to me, through the queen, what he will have written. That is settled.'

"After these words the king retired. The queen told me I was at liberty to seek her whenever I judged it necessary, in taking care nevertheless to choose by preference the days Mme de Thibaut would be on duty.

"I was careful not to communicate to Mirabeau the fears my interview with the king had given rise to. I thought, on the contrary, I ought to sustain his firmness, and incline him to fulfil with courage and devotion the part they wished him to take.

"I began by telling him what the king and queen thought of his talents; they had, in fact, with much justice and discernment, been very diffuse on that subject. I did not conceal from him, however, the question the queen put to me as to his pretended participation in the events of the fifth and sixth October. In an instant he changed countenance; he became yellow, green, hideous! The horror he felt was striking. To calm him I gave him an account of all I said to the queen to set her right on the point, and I could not too often repeat to him that she was completely convinced of his innocence; for long afterwards he retained a painful expression, from the idea of having been the object of so horrible a suspicion. When he had recovered his emotion I spoke to him of the confidence

the king and queen had conceived in his sentiments, opinions, and monarchical principles. I then said to him they desired to know from himself what the services were he thought he could render them.

"The effect of this overture on his *amour propre* did not escape me; I saw that man, who thought himself, and with reason, so immeasurably above others, succumb notwithstanding to that kind of magic, which royal personages can exercise when they understand how to make themselves benevolent. Mirabeau was enchanted that at last he was placed so as to be useful to the king. I even found that the difficulties of arriving at success, which he had so often presented to me as almost insurmountable, became in his eyes too easily levelled. I took care not to let him see this. I then told him of the disposition in which I found the king, and which was very fair. Louis XVI. was far from dreaming of reconquering his former absolute authority; he was perfectly resigned to the loss of power and the rights of his predecessors that the revolution had taken from him; I might almost say that on that point Mirabeau was less resigned than himself.

"In requesting Mirabeau to occupy himself with the writing I was charged on the king's behalf to ask of him, I recommended him not to be binding himself to any very brilliant promises. A few days after, he brought me the letter which will be found in the records, under date of the 10th May, 1790, and which is addressed to the king."

THE letter which he had consented to write to the king had elevated the queen to hope and joy. This princess hastened to secure to herself more indissolubly still the powerful auxiliary providence had sent her, by discussing in a secret interview with the Count de la Marck the disposition and wishes of his friend. "She confirmed me," relates this negotiator, "in what the Count de Mercy had told me, of the satisfaction the king allowed to escape him on reading Mirabeau's letter. She then questioned me as to what would be the best way of making M. de Mirabeau satisfied with her and the king. I answered that I must take time to reflect, but that it seemed to me, at the first blush, indispensable to secure him a decent competency which, whilst occupying himself with state affairs, would allow of his neglecting his own for the time being—that I knew he often was without common necessaries, and as to the rest I would communicate my ideas on that point the first time I again had the honour of seeing the queen."

The Count de la Marck on the following day made known this conversation to his friend, and asked him frankly to make his conditions for the payment of his debts by the king, and for the monthly tribute of the Court, which seemed to him indispensable to his individual support, and for the expenses of the co-operators whom he would be obliged to make join interests with him in his labours.

"A few days after," relates La Marck, "Mirabeau

paid off the whole of his debts. Amongst them were some that were at any rate ludicrous, and which but too well attested to the vicissitudes of a life sadly irregular. For example, his wedding-suit was not paid for. The whole amounted to 200,000 francs.

"A few days after, the queen sent for me. 'Before the king comes,' she said to me directly, 'I wish to tell you it is decided the Count de Mirabeau's debts are to be paid. He has other intentions on the subject, and he will speak to you about them himself. M. de Mercy may already have told you that the king is very satisfied with M. de Mirabeau's letter; he does not and cannot desire more than M. de Mirabeau promises in that letter; he only hopes he will keep to his word; we reckon on it, you may assure him. The king requests you will see about the payment of these debts and to take upon yourself the whole of this affair; but never lose sight of this, that our connection with M. de Mirabeau must remain secret.'

"I first reassured the queen as to this latter point, but as to the payment of the debts, I begged her to employ some other person than myself, and told her it would be easy to find one sufficiently certain and discreet for such a mission. The queen persisted it should be me, but I as firmly but respectfully held to my determination, and she ceded at last to my objections. I observed to her at the same time, that it was essential she chose some one who was in the habit of seeing her frequently, so that I might also be enabled to address myself to them any time I required to send notes, cautions, &c.; which would naturally result from the re-

lations established with Mirabeau. This precaution was indispensable; without it compromising deductions would, without doubt, have been drawn from my intimacy with Mirabeau and my frequent appearance at the Tuileries. The queen, after having looked about her, proposed M. de Fontanges, archbishop of Toulouse. He was one of her chaplains, and was indebted to her for his archbishopric. He was very devoted to her, and she saw or communicated with him daily.

"This point settled, I imparted to the queen my opinion, that little good would be derived from their agreement with Mirabeau if they were to confine themselves to clandestine communications between the king and him. I tried to make her understand that the first thing to be done was to put Mirabeau in communication with the ministers, in order that he, agreed with them, might defend their schemes in the Assembly.

"The queen replied, that she believed such a plan would be impracticable with the disposition of the present ministry, but that I could speak about it to the king, who appeared at that moment.

"The king began by repeating to me the queen's words on Mirabeau's letter, which had given him, he told me, great satisfaction. He seemed to have the same unlimited confidence in the future as the queen, and even more; he looked on it as an easy matter to re-establish things on a respectable footing. On that point, I must do him the justice to say, he exacted little for himself personally. He thought, besides, that if the ministry were to have more difficulties and embarrassments in the future, he would have less

responsibility and consequently more tranquillity. The king saw, in his personal relations with Mirabeau, the means of securing in advance this tranquillity; but he opposed my remarks on the necessity—in my eyes indispensable—of those relations extending to the ministers. Was it suspicion of them or of Mirabeau? This is what I could never unravel, and I should be inclined to believe it the effect of his weak character, which rarely permitted his taking a complete resolution, and, with all its consequences, carrying it out.

"The king returned me Mirabeau's original letter, saying: 'You will keep it, also these four notes under my hand, each for 250,000 francs. If, as he promises, M. de Mirabeau serves me well, you will remit to him at the close of the session of the National Assembly these notes, for which he can claim 1,000,000. Between this and then, I will have his debts paid, and you yourself can decide what sum I ought to give him monthly to enable him to meet his present embarrassments.'

"I replied that I thought 6000 francs a month would satisfy him. 'Very well,' said the king, 'I will give it willingly.' Soon after, our conference ended, and the king dismissed me.

"I did not delay seeing the Count de Mirabeau. I informed him he would receive 6000 francs a month, and that his debts, up to the amount of 208,000 francs, would be paid. And then, telling him that the king was perfectly satisfied with the sentiments expressed in the letter he had addressed to him, resting with confidence on the zeal he had promised, I showed the

original of that letter which was to remain in my hands, and the four notes of 250,000 francs each, which I was also to take care of. I told him it was the king's intention to have that sum—1,000,000—remitted to him if at the close of the Assembly he had faithfully fulfilled the engagements contained in that letter, according to the conditions he himself asked to be judged by. Mirabeau let wild expressions of joy escape him, the immoderation of which certainly astonished me a little, and yet it explained itself very naturally; in the first place, the satisfaction of giving up a troubled, adventurous life, which till now he had been leading, and in the next, the proper pride at feeling that they at last reckoned on him. His joy knew no limit, and he discovered in the king all those great qualities which ought to distinguish a sovereign, and if there had not yet been proofs of them, it was, he said, his unfitted and stupid ministers who were responsible for not having known how to represent him to the nation with all the virtues he possessed; but for the future it would not be so. And soon he would be seen occupying a position worthy of his generous nature. I took care not to induce him to take more moderate ideas. On the contrary, I profited by that impetuous burst of gratitude, to stimulate still more the devotedness he showed, and which I have a perfect conviction was sincere."

A FRESH nocturnal interview between Mirabeau and the Count de Mercy, at La Marck's, cemented

that disgraceful commerce that a great man made of his intellect, and consequently of his character. Mirabeau, accustomed to sell himself, felt so little shame at it, that he surpassed himself in his interview with these two corrupters in vivacity, brilliant ideas, and easy eloquence. He infatuated the Count de Mercy with the prospects of safety and triumph he saw for the monarchy in his alliance with the court. The Count de Mercy told his two friends that the king had resolved on changing his ministers, and to nominate a council in which Mirabeau—hidden in the shade—would be the oracle and the absolute ruler.

La Marck placed before M. de Fontanges, who was charged by the queen with all the details and all the liberality of that negotiation, the state of Mirabeau's debts. M. de Fontanges was authorized by the queen to pay these debts, and to place in Mirabeau's hands the 6000 francs a month, as stipulated between the prince and La Marck. M. de Fontanges, a man of inviolable security, of incorruptible fidelity, and of a devotedness to his masters as unobtrusive as earnest, was also the secret means of transmitting Mirabeau's counsels to the court, and of the supplies from the court to Mirabeau. Mirabeau's levity and extravagance, however, was not long before it gave rise, much to the delight of his enemies, to various suspicions and symptoms of corruption. He passed to the eyes of the public—without a prudently arranged transition—from an excess of difficulties to an excess of wealth. He was tired of poverty and longing for luxury and voluptuousness. As there was no virtue in his glory,

so he did not esteem it sufficiently to sacrifice his pleasures to it. They spoke of his intemperance in enjoyments as they had spoken of his intemperance in work. He only compensated for one excess by falling into another. They cited the names of his venal favourites, chosen for a day, amongst actresses or stage dancers. He proclaimed his profligacy, as if to doubly testify to the double force of head and heart with which nature had invested him. Like Alcibiades, he loved that people should discuss his intrigues with courtesans, and of his nights given—turn about or altogether—to the want of rest of the statesman, or the want of rest of the debauchee. He rented an entire and splendid house in the Rue de la Chaussée D'Antin, near the boulevard,—the most wealthy and licentious quarter of Paris. Instead of one single servant, which in his obscurity had hitherto served him, numerous footmen, a *recherchée* table, a luxurious library, pictures, carriages, horses, open house to his friends and the sharers of his toil, without number, his debts liberally paid,—all roused astonishment, and caused inquiries to be made as to the source of a grandeur so opposed to the straitened and running-in-debt existence that he was known hitherto to lead. He was not surprised himself at these whisperings. Perhaps even through a vanity superior to his probity he did not mourn at having sold his help to a side, no matter which it was. The outrageous magnificence of his price, disdaining scruples, was one of the elements of his southern character,—bragging of corruption, even if he had not been sold.

His friends in vain remonstrated with him on the danger of thus displaying in advance the luxuriousness of a position which could only be of use to the king and monarchy by remaining hidden. He made excuses, he reduced his actual expenses, he promised to be less extravagant in the enjoyment of the gifts of the court. But the day after, he gave fresh causes for suspicion. It was the weakness of an upstart to fortune, which prevented his retaining the gold of his mercenariness in his hand, and who could only believe himself rich under the circumstances of dazzling others and dazzling himself.

He endeavoured from the very first day to make the king and queen feel, by his almost superhuman labours, the value of the aid he brought to the monarchy. "Mirabeau at that period," says he who bears testimony to his life, "did not grant himself a moment's repose. Sometimes in the tribune, then with the Jacobins, then in his cabinet, attentive to all that was being done, to all that was being written, dictating to his secretaries, writing himself, revising the writings he inspired in others; raising, in his intimacy with sharers of his toil, discussions on all subjects to bring forth fresh ideas, and seizing on them himself to digest, and then, above everything, not forgetting his pleasures. Such is the opinion one must form of that extraordinary man, that nature seemed to have created to astonish his contemporaries by the union of so many qualities and powers which

seemed incompatible in the same man. Nearly every day he caused a note to reach the queen through the Count de la Marck and M. de Fontanges, the compiling of which required the greatest secrecy and the most mature reflection.

These notes written by Mirabeau—depositaries of his thoughts—were returned to him by M. de Fontanges after the king and queen had read them, and given over by Mirabeau when dying to the Count de la Marck; bequeathed by the Count de la Marck after his death to M. de Bacourt, a diplomate worthy of criticising such a text; and are at length made known to history. They contain all the secrets, all the passions, all the genius, all the force, all the weakness, all the glory, and all the disgrace of their author.

We reproduce here the portrait drawn by Dumont of Geneva, at this period, of Mirabeau. This great character obtained his due at the hand of this witness and of this confidant of his private affairs.

"Mirabeau had then quitted his furnished house, and was living in the Chaussée-d'Antin in a house he decorated like a boudoir. His taste for luxury had never been gratified in the narrow circumstances he had hitherto lived in, but he loved pleasure and pomp, elegant furniture, a sumptuous table, a constant and numerous company. It must not be supposed, however, that our intimate associates, amongst whom were de Chamfort, de Pellene, his secretary, de Penchand, de Clavières, de Duroveray, de Reybaz, all, with

the exception of Pellene, Genevese like myself, were always peaceable. I had often to reconcile Mirabeau and his fellow-workers in their hasty quarrels, in which they mutually reproached each other with their neglect in their work or the defects of their characters. A mistress, young, beautiful, imperious, and selfish, Mme Lejay, the wife of a bookseller in the Palais Royal, had succeeded in Mirabeau's heart to the charming Dutch woman, Mme de Nehra, whom he had deserted, and whose son, aged six years, he was bringing up in his own house. Mme Lejay published the *Courier de Provence*, a paper edited by Mirabeau, Duroveray, and Dumont. Mirabeau made over to her his share in the benefit of that undertaking, which was both political and lucrative. Differences arose between Mme Lejay and Mirabeau's fellow-workers, on the division of the emoluments. Mirabeau, entirely governed by this woman, trembled at the resolution of her character more than he was subdued by her beauty. He yielded with regret the yoke of this imperious mistress, often rebelling, always reconquered. The wrath and exigencies caused by this connection both agitated and unsettled his life."

After the abolition of the titles of the nobility, he had continued to bear his. The people themselves, proud of the aristocracy of their idol, gave him the title of Count, and forgave him his pomp. "Mirabeau is very ill advised," said Dumont to Clavières, "thus to parade his suspected wealth. One would say, he was afraid to pass for an honest man!" He frequently suffered from his excess of labour and pleasure; he

complained of it to his friends. "If I believed in slow poison," he said, "I should have no doubt but that I was poisoned. I feel myself decaying, little by little consuming away." "I observed to him," adds Dumont, "that his kind of life would have killed any man long since less robust than himself." Not a moment of rest from seven in the morning till ten or eleven at night; incessant discussions, agitation of mind and of all the passions; imprudent diet, excess at table (that is to say, in rich food, for he was moderate in the use of liquors). "You must be a salamander," I said to him, "not to consume in such a wasting fire." He then made plans for retiring, as all statesmen and ambitious people do, at the moment of their fatigue and weariness. The disarranged state of his blood showed itself at this period in ophthalmia. I have seen him, since he was president, have leeches applied in the interval between the morning and evening sitting, and go to the Assembly with his neck enveloped in cloth to stanch the bleeding.

"In the tribune he was impenetrable; those who have seen him know that the waves rolled around him without moving him, and that even in midst of all the abuse he remained master of his passions. I remember hearing him deliver a report on the town of Marseilles; every word was interrupted by those sitting on the right side by abuse; he heard the words calumniator, liar, assassin, scoundrel, and all the eloquence of a Billingsgate, echo around him. He stopped a moment, and addressing himself to the most furious, in a soft sweet voice, said: 'I will wait, gentlemen,

till this pleasantness shall have exhausted itself,' and he remained perfectly tranquil as if they had given him the most favourable reception. He never looked on himself as sufficiently provoked to forget oratorial decorum. But what was wanting in him as a political orator was the art of discussion on subjects which were exacted from him; he did not know how to embrace a series of arguments and proofs; he did not understand refuting with method; also he was reduced to abandon important motions whenever he had read his speech, and after a brilliant beginning he disappeared, leaving the field to his adversary. Barnave had better reasoning powers, and followed step by step the arguments of his antagonists, but he had no imagination, gave no colouring to anything, had no style, and consequently no eloquence. One day when a parallel was drawn between his talent for argument and Mirabeau's talent for oratory, some one said, 'How can you compare that artificial, stiff hedge to a tree in an open space displaying all its natural beauty?' It is certain these two men were not of the same temperament; but Mirabeau well knew his weak point, and one day when he had been speaking with that description of refutation with some little success, he said to us, 'I see well enough that in order to extemporize on a subject, one must commence by well understanding it.' It was, moreover, the wise habit of Mirabeau to give himself leisure for reflection whenever he had to reply on important subjects. He called reflection, with much reason, man's greatest power. He took care not to neglect it. More a thinker than an

extemporizer, he never spoke without first writing or dictating his speeches. Resembling Cicero and Demosthenes in this respect, he read them over, put finishing strokes, gave them solidity by lengthened arguments, lightened them by touches of eloquence, recalled them to his memory, sometimes read them, but more often spoke them, adding, to that which he had meditated on, the abrupt unforeseen fire of inspiration. At the sittings when he was going to speak, he always made his secretaries and compilers follow him, such as Dumont, Duroveray, Pellene, and de Comps. He kept them shut in to a small room near the tribune, behind the president's office, waiting his orders. These confidants of his thoughts were desired to follow the discussions in which he took part, and to note all the ideas and all the refutations that the circumstance and debate suggested to them. If he was obliged to re-ascend the tribune for a reply, however short, he went first and consulted this intimate council. He dictated to them the terms in which he proposed answering his adversaries, he listened to their remarks, he noted their arguments, he wrote down his reply, he read it over to his friends, he made, so to speak, the trial of his inspiration in their presence before doing so in the presence of his auditory. He had too much respect for the tribune to present himself as a rhetorician simply, with words. The sense and the manner were of more importance with him than the useless facility of stringing words together. It was from this meeting he used to come out laden with ideas for his improvisations, as also for his speeches.

The statesman and man of eloquence left nothing to chance that he could himself keep for reflection. He felt himself speaking before posterity, and he watched from afar over his renown."

"Mirabeau's voice," says Dumont, "was full, manly, and sonorous; it filled the ear and pleased it; always sustained but flexible, he made himself as well heard when lowering it as when he raised it; he could run over comments pronouncing the final words with so much care that not one was ever lost. His usual manner was rather lagging; he began with a little embarrassment, often hesitated, but in a way that called forth interest; one saw him, so to speak, seeking the expression most apt; discarding, choosing, weighing the words, till he became animated, and the bellows of the forge were in full play. In the moments of greatest excitement, the feeling that made him lay stress on certain words to express their force prevented his being rapid; he had a great dislike to French volubility, and the false zeal which he called the thunder and storms of the opera. He never lost the gravity of a senator, and at his first beginning his fault perhaps was a little preparation, and a little pretension; he lifted his head with too much pride, and sometimes his contempt amounted to insolence. What is almost beyond belief is, that they managed little pencilled notes to reach him at the foot of the tribune, and sometimes in the very tribune itself (as he wrote an infinite number in the Assembly), and that he had the power of reading these notes whilst speaking, and

introducing them into his speech. He felt himself beautiful in his ugliness; when preparing his speeches he would proudly display and contemplate in the glass his bust, his great size, and his strongly marked features, pitted with small-pox.

"The great power of my ugliness," he said, "is not known:" and that ugliness he thought beautiful. He was very carefully and well dressed; he had an enormous head of hair, artistically arranged, and which increased the size of his head. "When I shake my terribly wild-looking head," he used to say, "there is no one that dares to interrupt me." He very willingly placed himself before a large glass, looking at himself with the greatest pleasure whilst speaking, throwing his head back and squaring his shoulders. He had that peculiarity of vain men, that the very sound of their names strikes on them pleasantly, and who can like even to repeat it themselves.

"But in looking for the characteristic trait of his genius, I find it after mature reflection in the political sagacity, the foreseeing of events, and the knowledge of mankind which he appeared to me to possess in a more rare and eminent degree than all the other qualities of the mind. In this respect, he left far behind him the most distinguished of his colleagues. There were moments when, he said, he felt as if he were a prophet, and he seemed in fact as if he had inspirations of the future. He was not believed, because others could not see as far as he did, and because his depression was often attributed to his self-

love; but I know at the time he prognosticated the greatest ill to the monarchy he had the most exalted idea of the nation's destiny in the future."

He said Necker was the pigmy of the revolution. "Malebranche," he added, "saw everything through God, Necker sees everything through Necker!" He called d'Esprémenil, Crispin-Catilina; Lafayette, Cromwell-Grandisson, or Giles-Cæsar. Like Voltaire, by reconciling the two names which contrasted, he gave the double signification of the pretention and helplessness of a living man. He had caricature medals struck and put in circulation against those he did not esteem, or that he esteemed sufficiently to fear. He could not suffer praise to be decreed to men of small genius. These praises seemed to him robberies from the men to whom legitimately belonged true glory. "Doubts have been raised as to his personal courage," again says Dumont. His youth proved that these doubts were calumnies. But he very wisely formed the resolution to refuse all single combat during the session of the National Assembly. "Our enemies," he said, "can find as many bravos as they like, and can, by duels, release themselves of all who give them umbrage, for were I to kill even ten, I should myself fall as the eleventh." He was always armed with pistols, and his servants also, like himself. He often feared being assassinated. He was adored by those who served him: exceedingly particular in his dress, he spun out the time by a thousand trifles with his *valets de chambre;* he read little and very rapidly; by a glance he discovered in those thousands of pages what

was new and interesting. He wrote a great deal and with great rapidity—a cramped hand; his hand-writing resembled hieroglyphic characters.

Copies of his manuscripts and speeches were made in his house, with a promptitude which however did not satisfy his impatience. They were copied one after the other 10 or 12 times to attain the beauty of style he sought to give his discourses. His hours were seized on by the public, who beset his doors. His *levées* were those of a prince. They commenced at seven in the morning, and continued without interruption up to the hour of his going to the Assembly. Even then, his stairs, the court-yard, the entrance to his house, the street, were all filled by groups assembled from admiration and curiosity. The people perceived in him, through instinct, the royalty of human intellect, and the only true genius of the revolution and the country.

Raised above the enthusiasm of the nation by his last triumphs in the tribune, Mirabeau at length began to enjoy his glory. Never did a man placed so high by his genius descend so low in character as this all-powerful orator in the last months of his life.

After having sounded Necker, the Count de Provence, La Fayette, and even the Lameths, and after being half reconciled and half falling out with all, Mirabeau had at last reunited definitely with the king and queen, through the interposition of his friend the Count de la Marck, in an alliance almost equal to trea-

son against the Assembly. But after trying for some time to impress, through his counsels and through his only secret power, on the court, the Assembly, and on public opinion, a political impulse in the shape of a restoration of the executive power through the constitution, he perceived that a man had taken at the same time before the court and before the public a dictatorial position which entirely neutralized his plans, unless that man lent himself to an alliance with him, and thus by concentrating their powers, doubling them. That man was La Fayette. But La Fayette had refused every alliance that the empire had any share in. To draw him to himself was impossible; to overthrow him difficult. There was nothing left but to knock under to him, to bring him over to his own views, and make himself the instrument of the man whose equal he could not become. To flatter what one scorns, to yield to the man one declares inferior to his part, to tie oneself, to give oneself, to sell oneself to him that one is burning to betray, is the last step in the decline and degradation of oneself in one's own eyes. Pride no less than virtue protests against such a prostration of dignity and human sincerity. It is nevertheless from this deep state of degeneracy that one is forced to contemplate Mirabeau, by the correspondence in his own writing where he is himself his own informer.

However, the disgraceful prostration of Mirabeau failed before the inflexibility of La Fayette, and the

queen's entreaties to the general had not succeeded in uniting these two rivals. There remained for Mirabeau, as the last resource of ambition or of employment, the queen herself. If he could but succeed in seeing her free, and inspiring her, through his dazzling words and the chivalrous warmth of his devotion, with the conviction of mind and the confidence of heart which he required, to govern absolutely her resolutions, he did not doubt but that such a coalition, between the seductive majesty of a queen, thrown through misfortunes under his guidance, and the unbounded power of his own intellect, would govern the king by his wife, and the revolution by the king. At any rate he would have been the sublime Strafford of France, and he was strong enough of heart, or ambitious enough of posterity, not to have dreaded the scaffold of Strafford.

Under this impression, he for a moment despaired of all if he did not obtain secret interviews with the queen, and he hoped past all hope if he could obtain the interviews he desired with her. All his correspondence, during the six weeks that preceded the federation with La Marck, M. de Fontanges, and the queen herself, was nothing but a passionate insinuation, direct or indirect, to the mysterious favour he solicited of Marie Antoinette. It was not alone politics and ambition, but the man, which made Mirabeau aspire to that august intimacy with his sovereign. The tribune had never thoroughly effaced the gentleman, in his heart. The revolution was only in his spirit, royalty was in his blood. He had only threatened his masters so much in order to subdue them, and having subdued

them, to serve them. He suffered remorse at having struck too far and too high against royal heads. He bitterly regretted his threatening apostrophe as tribune, and the outraging to the very quick the person of Marie Antoinette in his interviews with La Fayette, the Lameths, and Barnave. He would like to have recalled these bursts of passion vented in words that had rendered them immortal. He wished at least to obtain pardon from the lips of the woman that they had pointed out to the dagger of her enemies. The more violent and bitter he had been, the more did he desire to show himself repentant and devoted to that sovereign, dethroned already in the hearts of her subjects, and who had no other protection against them than that of her first persecutor. That situation, novel in history, of a ringleader who crushes and raises up a queen, flattered his pride, intoxicated his ambition, and impassioned his heart. For, it must be repeated, thoroughly to understand the obscurities of this great man, he had a heart. That heart, as strong as his intellect, caused his reason, unknown to him, invincibly to lean to the side that sentiment attracted him; and in Mirabeau's return towards the queen at that crisis of his public life, there was more heart in it than politics.

The queen equally desired and dreaded this interview, which might commit her farther than was consistent with her safety and dignity as queen. She had always led him to hope and always put him off on pretexts that were not even excuses. It required nothing

less, to force her to that decisive favour, than Mirabeau's urging a little insistingly the fear of displeasing him too deeply, and the imminence of the perils that menaced her through the approaching reunion with France, confederated in Paris. But the method of keeping secret these interviews between the queen and her ally was difficult of assuring. The Tuileries, where the national guard alone did duty, was less a palace than a prison. Every eye knew the face of the great orator. La Fayette had peopled the approaches and even the interior of the palace with diligent watchers, who would have informed him of the presence of such a visitor in the private apartments of the queen. One of his superior officers was on intimate terms with one of the women belonging to the private attendants of the princess. All was visible, and all would be revealed in that palace. It was necessary in order to facilitate the interview and retain secrecy, that the royal family should affect the necessity of breathing for a few days the pure spring air at the palace of Saint-Cloud,—the favourite personal residence of Marie Antoinette. This palace, surrounded by a forest, accessible by the avenues and gates of the public park, and by the private park reserved up to the very windows of the queen, permitted concealment regarding the interviews of the queen and her advisers, even with the most jealous inquisition, especially when under the shadow of night. The reliance of one single woman of the princess, and one single valet in waiting, to introduce, and to conduct the visitor out, was all that was required. These two trustworthy persons were

secured to the queen during her stay at Saint-Cloud.

La Fayette on one side, the Lameths and their friends on the other, the one partially informed, the others simply warned by the appearance of Mirabeau's actions, sought at any price to acquire the proof of the intimacy of which they felt the conviction. They had the approaches to Saint-Cloud carefully watched. Mirabeau on his side watched the spies. Notice being given him at last, by the queen's chaplain, M. de Fontanges, of the day and hour Marie Antoinette would await him in the park belonging to her residence, Mirabeau, a few days beforehand, set to work to turn aside the ideas and deceive the watchfulness of which he was the object, by rides on horseback out of Paris, and without an object. He pretended to require horse exercise in the *Bois de Boulogne* and in the *Bois de Meudon*, for the sake of his health. One of his nephews, the young Count du Saillant, accompanied him. Their return into Paris without having stopped at any of the gates confirmed the report, that Mirabeau's rides were without any other object than pleasure. The interview with the queen was fixed for the 3rd of July, at the fall of night.

Mirabeau opened his heart to his favourite niece, the Marchioness d'Arragon, who occupied a country-house on the Passy hill. He slept several times at his niece's so that every one might be accustomed to his occasional absences from Paris without seeking for any motive. By avoiding the frequented roads, there were several rural walks across the tilled fields, leading from Passy to Saint-Cloud. A few days before the

3rd of July, Mirabeau, unwilling to trust his secret to any hireling, addressed himself to his nephew, the young Count du Saillant, whose inborn devotion to the monarchy of his ancestors had often clashed with the revolutionary opinions of his uncle. "Are you still an ardent royalist?" asked the orator of the young man, with a meaning smile which took for granted yet asked for a reply. The Count du Saillant frankly told him, that the misfortunes of his sovereigns, far from detaching him from their cause, had but added compassion to duty in his heart. "Well!" replied Mirabeau, with the accent of a gentleman who is converted, "as you are still so devoted to the king, I am going to offer you an opportunity of serving him, and perhaps of saving him." He then confided to his nephew his secret alliance with the court, and of the interview between himself and the queen which was indissolubly to cement that coalition of the crown with talent. He made him feel the importance of secrecy in a matter on which his head depended, and perhaps even the head of his sovereign. The uncle and nephew together sought means of securing it. In the state of ferment that the people of Paris were then in, the authentic discovery of an understanding between the princess and tribune might be the means of causing the cry of a double treason to break out, and from the cry of treason to the death of Foulon or Flesselles there were but the uplifted arms of a band of assassins.

It was arranged that the Count du Saillant, disguised as a postilion, should drive his uncle in a

carriage with two horses to a private gate in the park of Saint-Cloud.

Mirabeau left Paris on horseback, and passed the day of the 2nd July at his niece's house at Passy. At the close of day, as if he wished to return unexpectedly to Paris, the Count du Saillant, who had sent the servants under various pretexts out of the way, himself harnessed the horses and put them to the carriage, and conducting his uncle by ploughed roads that he had studied the previous day, he crossed the bridge, turned into the town of Saint-Cloud, and set Mirabeau down on the top of the hill, not far from an entrance into the park very little observed. An attendant of Marie Antoinette's was waiting for him: the gate opened of itself, at the first sound of footsteps from without; and closed on the visitor. They guided him silently by the remaining twilight towards a pavilion, the most elevated in the private garden belonging to the palace, where the queen awaited him. The place where the conference was held could not have been more dramatically chosen by history, to impress on the mind of a proud and sensitive man that he was chosen from necessity. This subject, become in a few months of vicissitude more king than the king himself, and the queen of one of the most powerful empires of Europe, escaping stealthily from her palace to meet a repentant factionist, and obliged to trust herself to obscurity, as to such an extent would the least comunication with her create umbrage, misery, and perhaps even

death to those who devoted themselves to her destiny! The high shadows of the old park of Saint-Cloud cast their darkness (not long since favourable to the voluptuousness of a young and trifling court) over the secrets of a hopeless policy; at their feet lay that white-looking road of Versailles and of Sèvres; where, with the retinue of that vanquished and humiliated court, one might think to see the decapitated heads of their guards on the pikes of their assassins! A few steps beyond this rising ground, was cast the glimmering light from the windows of the chambers of the royal apartments, where, in ignorance of their destiny, slept the children of that dynasty on the brink of dethronement, proscription, and scaffold, whilst their mother watched, humiliated herself, and wept in those gardens to redeem them from death; and lastly, above the vast roofs of the castle, and the court resplendent with the Seine, the reflection in the heavens of the millions of lights and reverberations from that capital from whence came, like a human volcano, without pity and without rest, the clamour, the seditions, and the downfall of that throne! Never to an assembled multitude had the great orator addressed such moving and tragic language as that which, inspired by the spot, the foot-paths, the night, and the woman he was going to meet, spoke within himself at the end of the avenue they made him cross. That man, by the grandeur of his thoughts, and the vibration of his great mind, was worthy of hearing and representing, even to tears, the eloquence of the place and hour.

Through the reliance that may be placed on M. de Fontanges on account of his advanced age—who after exile became Bishop of Autun—it is known what was heard or repeated at this interview, to which this chaplain of the queen was the sole person trusted in the palace, and who was also a witness, at a distance, in the garden.

She awaited Mirabeau, according to her own words, with that shiver of fear and hope which, for some time, the name of that man in whom, to her, the revolution was personified, and who now personified the sole hope of subduing or seducing the revolution, had caused her. Courts, like people who do not understand the abstruse and anonymous power of thought, give a man's name to everything in order to comprehend it, see it, and either worship or hate it. The name of Mirabeau was to the queen, and also the king, the name of the insurrection of the States General; of the insolence of the National Assembly; in a word, making itself a place facing and very soon above the throne, of the rising in Paris on the 14th July, of violence, conspiracies, and of the crimes committed by the factions on the night of the 6th October. In their eyes he had been guilty, accomplice, or accused of all these disasters. He was the giant of the people, the Samson of the monarchy. He alone could have caused the disturbance, and he alone could in their eyes sustain and reconstruct the edifice under the ruins of which he had nearly crushed them.

On perceiving the queen on the esplanade, outside of the pavilion, a few steps from him, Mirabeau for a moment remained immovable and confounded as if suddenly struck to the heart. He bent his head down very low, in an attitude of respect and sorrow that asked for pardon for his name, his presence, and his faults, in a manner no language could have expressed. There was in that one single gesture the emotion in the presence of a woman, the reverence in the presence of a queen, agitation and humility before his sovereign, repentance of his wrongs, gratitude for the favour, and the oath of reparation.

The queen understood all that mute discourse, and herself gained courage before the man who knew how to fascinate as well as intimidate. She forgave everything before he had spoken a word. One is apt to forgive much when one hopes much. Her countenance brightened beneath the shadow of her sorrows with that look, that smile, that blush of conquered timidity which creates the charm of so many other charms. Her face, seen through the fading twilight which conceals the first blemishes and pallor of age, leaving visible only the majesty and purity of her finely-marked features, dazzled and deeply touched Mirabeau, so sensitive to all the diversities of nature in women, and finding attractions in all. The still delicately-defined maturity of Marie Thérèsa's daughter, the grave languor of the mother, the dignity of the princess, the sorrow of the woman, had taken nothing from the beauty of the queen. Her hair, which two years later turned white in one single night's captivity—the pre-.

cursor of death—was still abundant and soft, and the fair shade of her native Danube; maternity had neither increased nor aged her figure; the gentle gravity, the hidden sadness, the subdued pride, the want of repose, the rending of the heart's feelings, the constant tears, had on the contrary concentrated in her looks, on her lips, on all her features, more of that cheerfulness of expression which vents itself in youth and is lavished in happiness, but which is reaped in maturity, and to which sorrow adds that most penetrating of nature's gifts to beauty, the pathos of the eyes, so near to the pathos of the heart.

She advanced towards Mirabeau with a graceful haste in her steps; and he, deferring much more to the courtly etiquette due to a woman, than regarding the etiquette of the throne when in presence of the king, waited according to custom for the queen to address him first.

"*Monsieur le Comte,*" she said, in a tone of voice which attested the timidity she had to overcome to speak to such an interlocutor, "to an ordinary enemy, or to a man who had sworn the destruction of the monarchy without having the brain to understand that a monarchy is a necessity to a great people, I should at this moment be taking a rash step and making an attempt very much out of place, but when one speaks to *a Mirabeau,* one rises above such fears and such ordinary considerations, and one is not more sure of being understood by his talent than by his loyalty."

WHETHER it was that she herself discovered with

that wonderful ability of a woman's and mother's instinct the vibrating note in Mirabeau's heart at that moment in using the expression *a Mirabeau*, which separated the statesman from all other men, and which placed him by anticipation beyond etiquette and time amongst the historical men of posterity, or whether La Marck and M. de Fontanges, knowing the conceit of their friend in his own powers, had insinuated these words to the queen, these words, as much as the tone of her voice, made his vanity and heart tremble with bewilderment. It was never known what reply he made, except by shreds of disconnected communications made by Mirabeau's friends, from whom he withheld nothing that flattered his pride, and by the written counsels in his subsequent notes to the queen, probably the echo, with after-reflections and developed comments, of that interview. History relates but does not invent in such a drama. It would be profaning at once genius, majesty, and sorrow to place imaginary words in Mirabeau's mouth, or fancied tears in the eyes of the queen. All that is known of this interview, which was prolonged three hours into the night, without ever appearing, to those who were awaiting at a distance its conclusion, to cease, is that Marie Antoinette often boasted afterwards to the king and those most intimate in her confidence, of the plentiful and penetrating words she found to sustain the conversation with Mirabeau, of the impression the genius of that man so dreaded had made upon her, and of the deep and unchangeable impression she flattered herself she had made on him.

In truth, at the moment of taking leave of the queen, Mirabeau, always slightly theatrical when under the influence of sincere emotion, and believing always in posterity as a witness, threw himself on his knees on the gravel at the feet of the queen, and taking in both his hands the hand she held out to him, whilst bending gracefully to raise him up: "Madame," he cried, in a tone raised above the murmur of a whispered interview, "when your heroic mother, Marie Thérèse, granted one of her subjects the favour of receiving him, she never dismissed him without giving him her hand to kiss!" Then glueing his lips to the fingers of the queen, which were moistened by his tears, he rose up suddenly as if by some inward emotion lifting him above the earth, and exclaimed with lyric enthusiasm: "Madame, that kiss saves the monarchy."

The queen herself, carried away by an emotion that had become a trust in that interview, accepted the augury, re-entered her apartments in tears, and fainted near the cradle of her children. "That man has upset me," she said the following day to the woman in waiting in the palace, who was astonished to see her so pale. "It cost me much, alone to meet the destroyer of the monarchy! But all is forgotten; he redeems his faults by his devotion. With such a man for him, the king is saved!" On the third day after, M. de Fontanges wrote to the Count de la Marck that the queen had suffered so much from the agitation arising through her conference with his friend, that she had not left her apartments or her bed for two days. Mirabeau rejoiced as much over the impression he had

made, as the impression he had received. He returned to Paris resolved either to make the king to triumph or himself to die.

But already the watchers employed by La Fayette and de Lameth's spies had got wind of the meeting in the park of Saint-Cloud between the queen and their enemy, and had caused a letter to be circulated, pretended to be written by a woman attached to the court, let fall and picked up by a passer-by in one of the park avenues, giving an account of the presumed interview, without, however, giving the true details.

"Rumours are afloat concerning the ride of Saturday," wrote M. de Fontanges on the 5th to the Prince d'Arenberg, "though it only appears to me as a whisper. But warn Mirabeau, so that he may pay attention to what is said, and that he may endeavour to turn the current of suspicions."

Mirabeau on his part wrote on the 6th to the queen: "They have placed before the Committee of Inquiry a letter denouncing my interview at Saint-Cloud. This letter is written in a bad hand, and so full of orthographical errors that it seems to me artificial. They pretend it was found on the Monday or Tuesday in the park of Saint-Cloud. . . . It is clear they are trying to make out an intrigue in all this in *l'Orateur du Peuple*, which has already denounced it. The foundation did not appear sufficient. I know without any doubt that the Lameths, Dupont, Menon, d'Aiguillon,

and even Pétion, are doing their utmost to obtain certain proof of my having held an interview at Saint-Cloud. I do not believe all their machinations put together would result in my being seriously aspersed in the National Assembly, but they might compromise me and render me unpopular.

Such was that interview, the last illusive hope of the queen's, and the greatest height to which Mirabeau's power reached, now nearing its decline, through abandoning the road along which he was the first to drag the nation.

Revolutions often re-establish for one day what they have destroyed; but they never cause simply to totter what their mission is to shake to the foundation. They may be led sometimes by talent and courage, but they can never be made to retrograde before they have reached and gone beyond their ends. Their power of impulsion becomes so much the more irresistible as it meets with resistance. When they are ministered to, they rise up in rebellion; when they are commanded, they obey; dike them round, and they will swamp themselves; if they are betrayed, they will be revenged.

Mirabeau, who knew so many things by theory and inspiration, was about to learn now by experience at the expense of his reputation, and, had he lived, at the expense of his blood. All powerful at the head of the revolution to complete and restrain it by the hand of the people, by passing into the gloom of the court party he was a mere deserter, but in fighting against it by the hand of the king he became a traitor. The character had destroyed the statesman.

Besides, when the man shows, the state exists no more in him. It was the misfortune of this destiny that it became elevated too late. At the moment he was called, it ceased to be possible. At any rate, one likes to study in the counsels of the only real political man of the revolution, which were sometimes efficacious, often fruitless, always eloquent, the resources and powerlessness of genius when contending with circumstances stronger than himself.

But we must admit we see more frequently, by the emptiness and perfidy of his plans, that his pretended miracles were but used to conceal the abyss or to deepen it still further. His want of power was the expiation of his immorality. He had too much talent to deceive himself. But he prolonged the illusion in the minds of the king and queen, so as to prolong the salary of his venal fallacies. Perhaps also it cost him too much to admit his powerlessness to himself, and he became satisfied by flattering his own conceit through clever chimeras, in which his exalted intellect ceased to believe, though his vanity and interest pretended still to do so. The day Mirabeau sold himself, he also condemned himself to be no longer the adviser but the flatterer of a monarchy which he was leading rapidly to destruction.

In the Assembly, Mirabeau was obliged to carry out at the same time his reputation as the promoter of liberty; to restore the royal power by the hands that had just destroyed it; to profess the principles that the

court had paid him for supporting; to distrust Machiavelianly the edicts through the excess of their consequences, and to husband his own popularity, the prerogative of his genius, which created his sole influence.

His perplexity was grievous. If he spoke too favourably of royalty, he disclosed his understanding with the court, and gave a stab to the constitution which was his own work. If he did not say enough, he abandoned the king to his unhappy fate, and then his ambition perished with him. His agitation, his vigils, his labours, his sleepless nights, his speeches, his erasures, his notes, his agonies during the days, from that time forth, preceding the tribune, fully bear witness both to the despair of his mind and the energy of his intellect. His enemies had no further need then to contend with a man who had already committed suicide.

Never had Mirabeau appeared to be fuller of life and strength than now; yet the days of the great man were numbered. A wasted youth had, as he himself said, disinherited his maturity. His double passion for love and glory had shortened his years, which nature seemed to have destined to be long, like his own perspectives of enjoyment, ambition, and memory. However, no matter what his strength of organization was, he carried in him three diseases which undermine the strongest body—genius, eloquence, and the revolution. Genius is a flame, but it burns; eloquence is a power, but it wastes him who brings it forth. Great orators

rarely see an old age, whether it is the hatred they provoke that kills them, like Demosthenes, Cicero, Strafford, Danton, and Vergniaud; or speech that consumes them, like Chatham and Mirabeau. Besides, revolutions are of themselves a disease which quickly carries off those that live in their atmosphere. The blood, accelerated by the pulsation of events, ideas, and passions that revolutions stir up with greater rapidity than in ordinary times, produce a continuous fever in men as in things. They live faster, and exist a shorter time. A revolutionary generation is old or cut down before the age of manhood. None had ever more personified the revolution than Mirabeau; none were ever to feel the inward conflagration as he did. That man was calcined by the fire of the age.

Notwithstanding that his powerful frame, his palpitating flesh, his thick muscles, his sonorous voice, still presented to the eyes and ears the signs of an athletic vigour, the friends that observed him closer than the crowd had for some months perceived in his countenance, his bearing, and even his corpulence, symptoms of weariness of the senses, and an exhaustion of the springs of life, which alarmed them, for many men lived in him and listened to him living, as if they had to die with him. Cabanis, a young philosophical doctor, who loved him for his geniality as much as his talent, studied without telling him the insensible decay of his constitution. He saw him consuming away, he said, his muscles softening, his observation becoming

blunted, his strength decimated, his colour shaded by leaden hues, his spirit pining away in melancholy,—all signs of the dejection of life as well as the dejection of the mind. The reflection of death, which he had never perceived but through the illusions of love, of glory, and in the far-off distance, seemed to near him now and overpower him. He studied, as a sorry game, to familiarize himself with its image. He asked his mistresses and friends for epitaphs for his tomb. He draped himself by anticipation in his shroud; he wondered what noise his memory would make in thus going to the tomb before his time. Like old men, he looked at children with that tender and sorrowful interest which in advance is attached to those who before long are to replace us in life, an interest resembling a sad farewell to the rising generation. His nieces, daughters of Madame du Saillant, beautiful children, on whom he delighted to let his glory shine, became still more dear to him. Whilst embracing the youngest and the most dazzlingly fresh amongst them, and in observing himself the contrast between his pallor and the rosiness of the child, he exclaimed: "Alas! this is death kissing spring!"

His secretary and friend, Dumont of Geneva, a man worthy of a statesman's confidence, was forced to leave him to return to his own country. "When we parted," relates Dumont, "he embraced me with an emotion such as I never witnessed in him before. 'We shall never meet again, my friend,' he said to me. 'I shall

sink under this. When I am gone they will learn my worth. The misery I have stayed will resound from every part of France. That criminal faction, the Jacobins, the envious, the Lameths, the La Fayettes, the Barnaves, the demagogues, that guilty faction that trembled before me, will no longer have any curb over them. I have before me but omens of catastrophes. Ah! my friend, how right we were when we, from the beginning, desired to prevent the *communes* declaring themselves the *National Assembly!* From that arose all the evil. From the moment the plebeians carried that victory, they have not ceased to show themselves unworthy of it! They desired to govern the king, instead of governing through him. But very soon it will neither be him nor them to rule, but a vile faction will command all, and spread horrors throughout the whole of France!' "

One feels in these words, as later one felt in those of Danton, the disordered mind of the tribunes go beyond that of the people. They ended by hating the occurrences they had promoted more than the institutions they had opposed. Misery and crime for them began at the moment when events went beyond their control. Their sorrow was not only from remorse, but pride. Philosophers alone have neither humiliation nor remorse when circumstances mislead them and calamities afflict them. Those who have worked for God alone are not surprised at being deceived by men. It was not conscience, it was genius, that sustained Mirabeau over the abyss of the Revolution. He felt this abyss must inevitably ingulf him, and, perhaps, at the bottom of

his heart he did not grieve much at a premature death taking him from the ingratitude of the people which was approaching him as it did Bailly.

Though he had been fickle, inconstant, and ungrateful towards his last love, Madame de Nehra, that young Dutch woman, now abandoned by him, watched over him from afar, knew his sufferings, and implored him to have recourse to more mature and experienced medical advice than the young Cabanis. His sister, Madame du Saillant, uneasy at his impaired state, gave him the same advice. He listened to nothing but his own partiality for Cabanis. He knew better than those who cared for him that his illness was not of that kind which diet and medicines cure. What he most desired was to live with his faculties unimpaired up to the last moment nature had assigned him, and to have Cabanis near him more as a kind and soothing friend up to his death than as a doctor. But nature was not alone at that moment in menacing his life; inspired fanatics, encouraged and paid by his enemies amongst the demagogue factions, contemplated disencumbering themselves of a man who raised obstacles to their designs, by riots, by the dagger, or poison. Vague information of their intentions had been received by his friends, his sister, and even his enemies, and amongst others by Cazalès. He was warned to guard against these assassins. They pointed out the assassins to him. A letter from him to a woman who had transmitted to him proofs, attest to the reality, if not of crime, at least of suspicion. "I never deceived any one," replied Mirabeau, by his own hand in a letter

recently discovered amongst his son's papers, "though I have myself been deceived all my life, and I certainly shall not commence with the one who desires to render me so great a service. Neither you nor your husband, nor even the wretched being who would not be the instrument of the crime, shall ever be compromised. The reason I do not instantly face the avowed villain is the desire of discovering his instigator, in whose machinations it is clear others may be enveloped as well as myself. Were I the only one, I should still be good for something better than being sacrificed by such a crime. Comps (his private secretary) shall know nothing; Frochot (another secretary) nothing; no one anything. Pellene himself (his most trustworthy confidant) only knows something because you spoke to him about it the first.

A few attempts—more or less admitted—of poisoning by means of liqueurs and coffee, received from unknown hands in his house, confirmed the rumours of the atrocious attempts that were plotted against his life. "You are right," he said to his sister, after having tasted a cup of coffee, with a suspicious flavour and injurious results on those who had partaken of it; "they hold me! They will have my life!"

But his unceasing labours, his sleepless nights, his licentious intrigues, his mental anguish, his heart's depression, were the real poisons running through his veins. He had rarely the time to inhale a few hours in the week of fresh, tranquil, and salubrious air.

Then, [redacted] followed by his friends and mistresses, or engaged by making rough sketches or notes for his speeches on the following day, in these rural leisure moments. He removed toil and sensual pleasures, he did not suspend them. A few months back he had purchased a rustic house called *Le Marais,* on the borders of the Seine, in the village of Argenteuil. He had the inside fitted up with all the luxury which was a necessity to the natural grandeur of his tastes; without were gardens and retreats, which recalled to him the early habits of his country life. Numerous workmen were employed day and night in transforming this retreat for him into a temple of luxuriousness, study, and love. A young professional dancer—a passing but passionate fancy amidst others of his attachments—had recently followed him to Argenteuil. Rumours were current in Paris of disgraceful scenes at a supper, where intoxication by wine had animated the intoxication of the senses. Mirabeau delighted in having the veil torn from his levities and excesses. He had the conceit of scandals as well as the conceit of glory. Accustomed to fame from his youth, he did not thoroughly enjoy pleasure, unless the fame of it came back to him by public report.

He had thus passed the night of Sunday-Monday, the 17th March, in his retreat at Argenteuil, when he felt with more than usual suffering a fit of the nephritic malady coming on, of which he had had already several attacks in his life. His friends recom-

mended him to take rest. The devotion of his heart to the interests of his friend, the Count de la Marck, prevented his doing so. The National Assembly was on the following day to discuss the question of mines, a question both fundamental and legislative, which would decide the expropriation of mine proprietors by the state, or the definite possession of the underground treasures of the soil to those who then worked them. The fortune of the Count de la Marck, of the house of Arenberg, almost entirely consisted of coal mines on the French frontiers on the boundaries of Belgium. On the decree of the Assembly depended the wealth or the ruin of his friend. Mirabeau, for the sake of the Count de la Marck, had deeply studied this economical and legal question. He had prepared for the tribune such speeches as were not alone to increase his own grandeur, but also insure the triumph of his protector's and friend's cause. It cost him much to renounce the applause of the legislators, astonished and subdued by his intellect. It cost him more to appear wanting in friendship and gratitude by deserting the tribune at a moment when his friend was likely to be lost for want of a defender. He wrestled against his sufferings, and entered Paris, either to conquer or die. In losing many of his virtues he never lost honour. Honour was in the friendly act he was about to perform for his benefactor. There was to be heart mingled with his death, as it had mingled in his errors.

On arriving in Paris on the Monday morning from Argenteuil, armed with the speech he had revised and completed the previous evening with Pellene, he was driven straight to the Count de la Marck's. "His countenance was much drawn," relates La Marck, "and he had all the symptoms of a severe illness. He fainted, and entirely lost consciousness. I used all my endeavours to prevent his going to the Assembly; but I did not succeed. 'My friend,' he always answered, '*those fellows* (the Jacobins) will ruin you if I do not go. I will go out, you will not succeed in preventing me.' Feeling himself too weak to walk, he recollected I had some old Hungarian wine, which he had frequently drunk at my table. He rang, and himself requested a glass should be brought him; having drunk two glasses, he got into his carriage. I wished to accompany him, but he would not even allow me to show myself in the Assembly on that day. He begged me to await him in my own house, where he would come the moment he left the sitting. I was compelled to give in.

"Towards three o'clock he returned. In entering my room he threw himself on a sofa and exclaimed, 'Your cause is won, and I—I am dead!' What I felt at that moment I cannot express here, with the shock I received on seeing the state my friend was in. After a few moments I gave him my arm to assist in taking him to his carriage; I got in with him. He went into his house, and never left it again but to go to his grave."

From the very first his illness assumed a fatal appearance. The signs were visible enough on his features to all his friends. One felt that his powerful vitality was subjugated by a force of dissolution more powerful still. The man of flesh and blood was struck down by the first blow, the intellect remained healthy, whole, and imperturbable, assisting with calmness and resignation at a powerless struggle between the convulsions of the body and the vain efforts tried, by art and friendship, to recover life. "My friend," he said to Cabanis, hastening to get ahead of, or avert, the evil, "I feel distinctly it is impossible for me to live many hours in such dreadful anguish. Make haste, if you can do anything, for I cannot spare you any time; this cannot last."

Cabanis did in fact hasten to give his friend a calming dose, which, by causing the patient's falling to sleep, destroyed the symptoms for the moment, without, however, reaching the cause, thus cheating nature without cheating death. The convulsions ceased, his groans were less, serenity returned to his features, his eyes, and his voice, a smile of relief parted his lips. Cabanis, only a novice, and more a man of theory than experience, gained hope by these illusions, and unfortunately spread it amongst those around him. The patient himself seemed to believe in a wonder of art or of nature. He grasped back life as one might the unhoped-for return of something we love after a heart-rending farewell. At night he prepared for sleep. "Ah! yes," he said to Cabanis, "it is very sweet to owe a second existence to one's friend!"

The doctor left him for a few hours; night came, but not sleep; fever, pain, suffocation, delirium, and convulsions of the muscles, distracted the patient till the morning. Cabanis began to think nature was more powerful than his palliatives. He tried to subdue it by those bold remedies which, in giving violent checks to the system, risk life for life. His acting thus in the dark aggravated the inflammation and debility. One felt nature was obstinate, or the doctor mistaken. His sister, his friends, and the attendants of Mirabeau implored him to call in other advice. "No," he said, "I will not do such an injustice, and cast such an affront on my friend; if I am to die no one can save me, and if I am to live, I will not that another should have the credit of curing me. I believe little in medicine, but much in friendship!" They ceased to press him, but the desperate state of the sick man spread in Paris from mouth to mouth. It was at the moment when threatened with his loss that they began to feel what they possessed in him. Every one thought himself struck through the man of the time. Nations are so constituted in their fickleness and ingratitude, that the man to whom the day before they might prefer a thousand rivals, will, the day after, look on him as a real prodigy of nature and without a rival, if death is about to snatch him from them. Whilst he still lives amongst them he is readily forgotten, suspected, slandered, censured, and condemned, but they will not that the grave should take him from them.

One would say that they, then, took as a tardy revelation from the dead a foreshadowing of what they

possessed, and a presentiment of how the whole nation must be brought to a humiliating level by the disappearance of one single man! This is not justice, nor gratitude, nor remorse, but pride. They feel that something of theirs is going to die in him. Jealousy alone rejoices quietly, but it also affects the universal mourning. Sure of vengeance in a few hours, it costs little to assume on the countenance and in words the hypocrisy of justice and the sorrow of admiration.

Such was the impression caused in Paris and in France by the news of the almost hopeless illness of Mirabeau. An electric shock seemed, on the 30th day of March, to have torn every citizen from his fireside. A continuous column of people of all conditions, opinions, and parties advanced from the two opposite sides of the boulevard, and were congregated in the wide street of the Chaussée-d'Antin, which he then lived in. That stationary and immovable crowd in the street held their breath as if to try and hear through the walls the last sigh of their orator. One heard nothing but the muttered whispers of men assembled round a death-bed. All traffic had spontaneously ceased in the adjoining streets. They feared the slightest noise might agitate the bed, or disturb the sleep that might bring back life to the patient. That multitude could not have been more tender at the pillow of a brother or a son. The same feeling seemed to move the hearts in all those thousands of breasts. These were the most pathetic hours and days of

France's sensibility. In the agony she felt on account of her orator, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary France well merited genius. Mirabeau had during his sufferings the most disinterested of apotheoses, the apotheosis of a nation's tears. The court which secretly trembled with fear at losing him, but which dared not show too great an interest for fear of betraying their alliance; the National Assembly, which felt as if it were mute, since they had lost his voice; the Jacobins, who would have rendered themselves odious to the people had they not at least feigned sorrow; the National Guard, who only saw in him a champion strong enough to wrestle with the factions; La Fayette and his friends, whilst fearing him as a rival, yet regretted him as patriots; the revolutionists of '89, who owed the revolution to him, the counter-revolutionists of '93, who hoped, through him, to cause a reaction and return again to the ancient government; the anarchists themselves, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Marat, all of them, whilst censuring him by their reproaches, could not help esteeming themselves through him—their former accomplice—and aggrandizing themselves by the past and future with that great man's name; and, finally, all the writers, the *artistes*, the enthusiasts, who having for disinterested worship the human species, had admired in him the words, style, and thoughts, and they now shed tears in anticipation for the light that was extinguished, the splendour of the age; all that mass crowding beneath Mirabeau's windows, animated by different motives, yet agitated by one universal emotion, formed that unceasing

assemblage of hearts. From time to time bulletins were issued through the wicket in the door to those nearest the threshold, giving despair or hope to the multitude. Thousands of hands copied and distributed these to the crowd. Each moan, each restlessness, every cry, every movement of the sick man had its counter-blow in Paris; every life seemed held by one breath.

The king, the National Assembly, sent hourly, either secret messengers or official deputations, to gather from the house of the patient the symptoms of every minute and every crisis. The Jacobins themselves, though inimical to him, sent a deputation, introduced by Barnave. Barnave did honour to himself in setting aside dissensions and rivalries in the presence of death. That supreme moment rendered him just. He forgot the adversary in the great man. The Lameths and Robespierre were less adroit or less generous; they did not appear at his door. "That idiotic people," said Robespierre confidentially, "know no more what they condemn than what they are weeping for; they ought to see in his death a special favour from heaven, saving the Revolution from the snares of the blackest of traitors."

The sick man made Barnave approach his bed, and pressed him with tenderness in his arms. He had deeply regretted the estrangement of the young Grenoble lawyer, but was never jealous about it. After the departure of the Jacobin deputation, he inquired

if Charles de Lameth was amongst them. They told him he had abstained from appearing: "I knew well he was a factionist," he said bitterly, "but I did not know he was a simpleton!" He had the conscientiousness of memory, and he showed that an act of dislike towards him would be unpopularity for the future.

THE day passed between the alternations of death and glory. The night was very bad. Cabanis, who watched in his room at the break of day, saw death more unmistakeably stamped on his features. Mirabeau, hoping nothing farther from his endeavours, gave up all contest with his fate, and desired the door to be opened to all his friends. He wished to have the enjoyment, at least, of bidding them farewell. "When I was of this world, . . ." he said, speaking of himself as of one already passed into the future. Between the attacks he passed the hours more calmly in affectionate intercourse with Cabanis, Frochot, La Marck, Pellene, M. de Talleyrand, his favourite sister, Madame du Saillant, and his nieces, whom he loved as daughters. Cabanis, baffled by nature, called in a celebrated physician, named Petit, to share with him, at least, the responsibility of such a life. It was too late. The science displayed by the old doctor was only to measure the strides of death. He tried, together with Cabanis, medicines, but without hope. Mirabeau jested Cabanis in a friendly way on his skill: "You are a great doctor," he said, "but there is one greater than you, the Creator of wind, which overturns all; of water, which

penetrates and makes everything multiply; and of fire, which vivifies and decomposes all! . . . To-morrow morning," he added, pressing Cabanis' hand in his, and making an allusion to the attack of the approaching night, "my fate will be decided."

He had M. de Talleyrand sent for, one of the political men for whom he felt the greatest attraction, and whose head he felt to be nearly on a level with his own, not from his power of speech, but by his clear-sightedness in everything. He conversed with that young man for two hours with the doors closed. M. de Talleyrand, up to this, has never revealed the privacy of that interview on the threshold of the grave. It will only be known through his *mémoires*, still sealed up. It is believed that Mirabeau confided to him his plans for restoring the monarchy by a liberal revision of the Constitution, and pointed him out to the king as the only man capable of succeeding to the management of affairs and men, which was now slipping out of his own hands. He left the defence of his memory to him, and he bequeathed him his mind as a statesman in default of his genius as an orator. He gave him a speech he had prepared for the Assembly on the question of wills. He requested him to read this funereal speech in the tribune after his death. M. de Talleyrand came away proud of this long confidential interview, but his lips were sealed.

La Marck, who did not quit his friend's roof, succeeded M. de Talleyrand. His tears, in spite of him-

self, revealed his grief to the dying man. Mirabeau talked to him of his affairs, already known to La Marck: "I have enormous debts," he said, "I am even ignorant of the extent of them, or if my effects will suffice for their liquidation. And yet I leave on earth beings that are very dear to me, and whose independence I have the misery of not seeing secured!" La Marck, with the generosity of a great mind, told him to dictate his will, without considering his possessions or debts, and to make such legacies as his conscience and heart dictated, supposing himself to be rich, and in default of any inheritance he swore to him that he would, where it was needed, discharge them out of his own fortune. That kindred of friendship surviving the friend, for the purpose of acquainting his conscience and do honour to his memory, softened Mirabeau to tears. His mind was set at rest on the heart of his friend.

The Count de la Marck was hourly urged by letters from M. de Montmorin and M. de Fontanges, to substract, in case of death, all letters—that might impeach the court of connection with him—from the suspicions and vengeance of the people. He watched with anxious solicitude the symptoms of his friend's approaching end, and the Jacobin party, whose spies were intent on all that left the house.

"These notes," he said, "and numerous other messages, which I received from various quarters, warned me not to neglect the precautions I must

take relative to the papers Mirabeau would leave after his death. I myself felt the importance of these precautions, and the necessity of sheltering those persons who would be compromised if written traces were discovered of the relations that had existed between the court and Mirabeau. Had I not been cautioned on the subject as I had, I should have guessed the line of conduct I ought to pursue under these circumstances by the conduct of people of all descriptions that surrounded the patient's house. The agents of La Fayette were seen incessantly roaming about, and those of the Jacobins who did not wish an opportunity of procuring accusing evidence to slip through their fingers. But the most undaunted of all the watchers was M. de Semonville, who, whether from fear of himself being compromised by Mirabeau's papers, or from the desire of obtaining matter which offered fresh food for intrigue, never left the sick man's house. I could not go in or out without incessantly coming across him, looking and observing everywhere, and talking to the servants. I saw, therefore, there was no time to be lost, and I was resolved to broach the subject with Mirabeau, however delicate a matter it was to touch on. He had perfectly retained his senses, except in rare moments of delirium, and even when he ceased to have the power of speaking he yet preserved the moral and physical power of expressing his thoughts in writing.

"Three days before his death, at a moment when I found him calmer, though he already knew there was little hope of his escaping death, I was going to

speak to him concerning the papers, when, of his own accord, he anticipated me in what I was about to say to him; 'My friend,' he said to me, 'I have by me a great many papers compromising to numerous people, to you, to others, and above all, to those I so longed to tear from the perils which threaten them. It might be more prudent to destroy all these papers, but I confess I cannot make up my mind to do so: it is in these papers that I trust posterity will find the best justification of my conduct in these latter times; it is in them the honour of my memory will exist. Could you not carry them away? Put them beyond the reach of our enemies; who just at this moment might make dangerous use of them by deceiving public opinion? But promise me that one day these papers shall be brought to light, and your friendship will know how to protect my memory when giving them publicity.'

"I replied at once I would give the pledge he required from me, and with the more earnestness, that I thoroughly shared his feelings on the subject, as I had almost always done, since the commencement of our intimacy. This reply seemed to be a great relief to him, and he gave me directions for gathering the papers together. I called his secretary, M. de Pellene, whom he requested me to take care of after his death. We put all the papers together, and after having burnt a great many of minor interest, I carried the rest in the evening to my house, taking every kind of precaution against being met by any one. Notwithstanding all the care M. Pellene and I

both took in the sorting of these papers, many, nevertheless, in the agitation and vexation we were in whilst performing this necessary act, were destroyed that were of great importance. It is the papers that were preserved on this occasion which form the greater portion of those I have destined one day for publication, in order to fulfil Mirabeau's wish and my promise to him.

"I will here refer to an incident which happened on the very day I transferred Mirabeau's papers to my house, but I must give a preliminary explanation. It was during the year 1790, that is to say, nine or ten months before Mirabeau's death, we were talking together on various subjects, when all at once we came upon that of noble deaths. This furnished him with a text on which he spoke with rapture and eloquence, but also with a certain emphasis when recalling the most dramatic deaths of ancient and modern times. Then, as I always did under similar circumstances, a little for the sake of argument, and a great deal on account of my feeling of inferiority in the presence of his eloquent persuasiveness, I took the side opposed to his thesis. I endeavoured to diminish the merit of what is usually termed noble deaths, by maintaining that they were often the result of a conceited affectation: 'As to me,' I said, 'the deaths I look on as the noblest are those which I witnessed on the field of battle and in hospitals, where soldiers and unknown patients preserved their calmness, not expressing a single regret at quitting life, and limiting their requests to being placed in a position, where, suffering less, they might die more easily.' 'There is a great deal that is very true in

what you say,' replied Mirabeau. And then we talked of something else.

"I had forgotten all this conversation when, the day I had taken away Mirabeau's papers, having afterwards returned to his house, I had sat down near the fireplace in the room where he was in bed; soon after he called me; I rose, and went close to his bed; he held out his hand, and pressing mine, he said to me: '*My dear connoisseur in noble deaths, are you satisfied?*' At these words, though naturally of a cold disposition, I could not restrain my tears. He saw them, and then said to me the most affectionate and touching things of his friendship and gratitude to me. I cannot here repeat the kindly expressions he made use of: if modesty did not call for reserve, I could never thoroughly express all the sublimity and force he found in his spirit, and the warmth and rapture of his soul to prove his attachment to me."

This extreme sensibility extended to his attendants. He was adored, as all men are who have sufficient heart to lavish its kindliness around them. With his servants, it was not what they actually did that he considered, but the sentiment which will render servitude noble.

From the commencement of his illness his coachman's young wife, named Harriett, would not, though far advanced in pregnancy, leave her master's bedside day or night. "Harriett," he said to her the day before his death, "you carry a child in your womb, for my

sake you are risking the life of another, and you never leave me; you owe yourself to your husband and children. Go, I desire it, I command you!" But no commands could tear this woman from the cares that alone she undertook for her master.

THE morning of the last day he experienced that deceptive calmness which is only life reposing before nearing the time when it ceases its vain struggle against death. The sky was clear, the sun rose with more than usual splendour, as if the more to be regretted, the birds were singing on the first leaves of spring, the room was flooded with light.

He had the windows opened, and said to Cabanis, according to the account of that materialist doctor, who had watched by his bed-side, "My friend, I shall die to-day! When one has reached that point, there is but one thing left to do; it is to have perfume thrown over one, to be crowned with flowers, to be surrounded by music, and thus pleasantly enter that sleep out of which there is no awaking!" These words, which were never affirmed by any one but Cabanis, form such a revolting contrast with the sorrowfulness, the solemnity, and the thoughts of last moments, that the dying man and other friends have doubted their authenticity, or at least set them down as merely uttered for the honour of the materialist alone. We share their incredulity, and whatever may be the doubts or the belief in a future state, nature is not deceived in this manner. One does not quit and enter either eternity or chaos with the

exalted and formal preparations of guests in former ages, by asking for flowers, inhaling perfumes, and listening to the music of festive instruments. The rectitude of Mirabeau's mind and the correctness of his feelings leave no room for credit in this voluptuous comedy before death. It is true he loved flowers, and he might have asked to be let inhale those that generally perfumed his apartment; but certainly he never asked for Anacreon's wreaths for his head, and the comforting and tender voices of the dying man's friends were the only sweet music that fell on his ear.

He had his bed wheeled near the window, and said to his secretary, Frochot, whilst pointing out to him the sun shining with all the brilliancy of a spring day: "If that is not God it certainly is his shadow!"

No other allusion to the Divinity at that moment came from his lips. But in his letters to Sophie, at a period when a solitary death in the dungeon of Vincennes left him no other witness than his thoughts, one finds appeals to the mercy of God and eloquent convictions of the soul's immortality; thus discrediting the atheistic views stated by Cabanis. The man was too perfect in him for him not to feel God in his nature, in his life, and in his death. Atheism is a boundary in the horizon of infinity. Genius is the conqueror of doubt.

But great men, towards the end of this century, lived and died in the semblance of an irreligion which was not impiety, but which was the solitude of the soul. Enemies to ancient forms, reformers of popular beliefs, which according to them had corrupted the

immaterial dogmas of Christianity; convinced of the necessity of causing a revolution in religious faith, in order to create one in ideas, desiring to detach the minds of the people from tradition in order to give them to reason, these philosophers distanced God from them in their last moments, for fear of ministers of worship approaching them. It is thus Voltaire, Mirabeau, Condorcet, Bailly, Danton, Vergniaud, Chénier, Charlotte Corday, and Madame Roland died without invoking any other divinity than justice, vengeance, liberty, and nature. It was not atheism, it was the void between two altars, on one of which that of the religion of antiquity existed no longer for them, and on the other that of reason, which as yet did not exist at all. From that were those deaths resembling falls into the grave, without seeing God. Such was Mirabeau's. But it was not an atheistic art, it was the protestation against worship.

His friends entered, and found him dressed by Harriett's hand, ready to receive their last farewells. "Sit on my bed, you here, and you there," he said to the Count de la Marck and Frochot, the two dearest to him amongst them, "and recollect what I am going to say to you." He then conversed, during three quarters of an hour, with a wonderful clearness of speech, and with admirable presence of heart, in his sentiments, and his affairs, and his memory, as connected with all that interested him on earth that he was leaving behind, and, above all, as to the political fate of his

country. He was an orator up to his very last breath, and a statesman beyond the tomb; then taking young Frochot's hands, and placing them within those of the Count de la Marck; "I bequeath this friend to you," he said to La Marck, "you have seen his tender attachment to me, he merits yours!"

Then falling back on the hopeless future of the king and the people that he was about to leave, the one without an adviser, and the other without any restraining hand over them, amidst anarchy and factions that were driving them against rocks: "I carry," he said, "the mourning of the monarchy with me! When I am gone, the factions will dispute amongst them for the tattered remains."

He lost the power of speech, and for three hours fell into a sleep troubled with dreams, which was neither delirium nor repose. The Count de la Marck, Frochot, Pellene, Comps, and Cabanis leant over him to try and catch the meaning of his muttered words. He noticed their anxious watching, and moved his lips into a smile as if he would embrace them. He warmed his hands in theirs. They were already icy cold. At the approach of an attack, he made a sign showing a desire to write. They gave him a pen and paper. He wrote one single word, *Sleep!* and handed it to Cabanis, with an expression of gentle reproach. That word was in illusion to a promise his doctor had made him the previous evening, of giving him opium when all hope had ceased, to spare him useless suffering. They pretended not to understand it. He persisted, and again took the pen: "Can any one, without being

merciless," he wrote, "let a friend die in cruel sufferings that may perhaps be prolonged for several days?" They satisfied him by administering a calming dose without risking his life, if any was still left in him. He perceived by his pains that they had deceived him. "Ah! you have deceived me," he said bitterly, on recovering his speech, "were you not then my friends?" He was silent again, and appeared to grow sleepy. The cannon that was fired in the Champs de Mars, for some national ceremony, roused him. "Are these already the obsequies of Achilles?" he cried, foreseeing his own obsequies and proudly personifying in him the hero of the Revolution. Then turning over on to his right side, and raising his eyes to heaven, he expired.

The soul of France seemed to evaporate with his last sigh. A mournful silence continued to reign over Paris, as if his spirit might still be disturbed. The public grief, at first passive, became frantic on reflection. It had fixed its last hopes on that great man, as the crew of a sinking ship by sudden instinct cling to the mast that must sink with them. Mirabeau could save nothing more, but as long as he breathed amidst the people, nothing seemed entirely lost to any party. He had by his own powers given a supernatural feeling to the nation, which caused even impossibilities to be expected from him. Destiny, more clear-sighted than the people, took him from among them at the most favourable moment for his own glory. At every fresh crisis they exclaimed;

"Ah, if he lived!" It was the funeral oration of ignorance. The power and wisdom they gave him credit for aggrandized his name by all the calamities which followed on his death. We doubt if, henceforth, he could have given to the monarchy any other help than fruitless words, or any other tribute to the Revolution than losing his head on the scaffold. His hour had passed. Every man, however great he may be, has but one. Mirabeau was dead, before Mirabeau. But he had given his life to truth, his name to the Revolution, his genius to France, and his words to the world. Demosthenes never spoke but for Greece, Cicero for Rome. He, as eloquent and more universal than these orators, spoke for reason and philosophy. They are the orators of a nation. He is orator of the human mind.

His obsequies, as he had foreseen, were the apotheosis of the Revolution. A deputation from the divisions of Paris requested that his body might be placed in the middle of the Champs de Mars, on the altar of the country, the only resting-place worthy of such a tomb. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld, president of the department of Paris, presented himself in the name of the capital to the Assembly. "At the death of a citizen," he said, "whose death is a national calamity, will it not be right to give to posterity a great example of gratitude? The temples of religion, ought they not to continue the altars of the country, and the tomb of a great man, who consecrated his life

to the people, ought it not to be on the altar of Liberty?" The capital proposed, in consequence, that the monumental edifice dedicated to the holiness of a shepherdess, the idol of the nation, should be consecrated to the holiness of genius, of virtues, and deeds of memorable men. Barnave did honour to himself by prohibiting a discussion about the dead man's titles, which might destroy the unanimity of the mourning. An artist proposed tracing a holy road in the centre of the Champs Elysées, as was formerly done in Rome, and to raise tombs at each side for celebrated men, exposed thus to the memory and emulation of the country. Mirabeau's monument was to be the first to inaugurate this avenue of glory. The Assembly, which could consecrate nothing but by the hand of priests, declared in favour of the church of Sainte Geneviève. Pastorel, afterwards chancellor under kings, but then an enthusiastic tribune, composed the beautiful epitaph which generations will efface and restore by turns, according to whether kings or the people inscribe their triumph on this monument: AUX GRANDS HOMMES LA PATRIE RECONNAISSANTE.

Whilst the Assembly, the department, the commune of Paris, the Jacobins, and the people were with emulation preparing these honours for Mirabeau, a tragic and mysterious scene was taking place in the mortuary house, near to his coffin. A young secretary of Mirabeau's, named Comps, his copyist, the pre-

server of his papers, the steward of his subsidies, the confidant, sometimes alarmed, of his intercourse with the court, on hearing of the death of his protector, retired to the highest story of the house, and shutting himself in his room, he struck himself five blows with a dagger. The attendants and guard, attracted by the noise of his fall on the floor and his groans, forced open the door, raised him up bathed in blood, and questioned him, but they only received a confused account, proving the wandering caused by pain, and at last restored him to consciousness. De Comps in his delirium had mingled with his cries of despair the words political assassination and poison as in connection with the death of his friend. One imagined he had revelations and proofs which by dying he would spare himself the horror of revealing. The people, who never believe in natural causes, after having exhausted every chimerical cause, believed Mirabeau to have been poisoned by the court, whilst the royalists believed him the victim of the Jacobins. They made a post mortem examination to seek for the traces of a death by crime. Popular revenge was so ready to strike, that had the physicians raised even the slightest doubt, bloody massacres would have attended his funeral. Nothing indicated poison, his life only had poisoned his body. The attempted suicide of Comps arose from a fit of insanity, brought on by the misery of losing a friend and by the terror of the posthumous revelations concerning secret communications with the court of which he had been the instrument, and of which he feared the penalty.

The ministers, the president of the Assembly, followed by almost the entire Assembly, the commune of Paris, the electors, the divisions, the National Guard, the clergy, the Jacobins, all crowded, on the 4th of April, in the evening, in the large street of the Chaussée d'Antin, awaiting Mirabeau's coffin, which was confided by his family to this procession. At five o'clock the procession began to move, preceded by a large body of cavalry, that forced open the crowd; La Fayette, at the head of representatives of 60 battalions, the Invalids, those veterans of the country, the national and Swiss troops, which composed the garrison of Paris, surrounded the body. The crown and civic sword decorated the coffin. He was borne by 12 grenadiers of the National Guard; numberless troops, with their arms reversed, followed him to the sound of funeral instruments. 400,000 citizens of Paris, and the 83 departments assembled and joined in the procession. The multitude, anxious to behold the pall that covered so much glory and so much talent, was so dense, that it took three hours to get from the dead man's house to the Church of Saint-Eustache, where the panegyric was to be spoken. At intervals the drums, which were draped in black, gave forth a dismal sound, resembling that of the people; the brass instruments, with their shrill notes, sent forth moans in the air, and made the people shiver. The impression was so vivid and so forcible, that it imposed silence and a terror of the future on the spectators. One might have said, according to his own words, that the dead man carried the mourning, not

alone of the monarchy away with him, but also of the country.

When the body was placed before the altar in Saint-Eustache, a volley of 10,000 guns was imprudently fired by the National Guard, which caused the pillars to totter, shook down the mouldings of the cornice, and might have buried 20,000 citizens in the grave of one. The Abbé Cerutti, an old Jesuit, since, intoxicated by philosophy and patriotism, an orator who united in the same tone the mysticism of the priest, the energy of the rhetorician, and the enthusiasm of the patriot, pronounced the official eulogy. But the eulogy was in the void that all the thinkers perceived beyond that coffin. Night had fallen over the capital before the procession, gone from Saint-Eustache, had accompanied and deposited the body in a vault in the cloister of the church of Sainte-Geneviève. He was not long to keep possession of that sepulchre. There is no more peace in the tomb for tribunes, in revolutionary times, than for kings. They pass from apotheosis to the gallows, with the vicissitudes of fickle popularity. The passions which agitate the surface of empires vibrate through to their profoundest depths. Mirabeau's treachery, when it burst into light, was not long in proscribing him his grave. Already Marat, silent the night before, wrote on the following day:—

"Oh, people! return thanks to the gods! your most formidable enemy has succumbed. He has fallen

the victim of his too numerous perfidies, victim to the barbarous foresight of his atrocious accomplices. They trembled on seeing the confidant of their frightful secrets hesitate! What good man would desire his ashes to repose by the side of Mirabeau? . . . . . ”
He who wrote these lines was himself to replace Mirabeau's body in the Pantheon, which, in 1793, was thrown down into the cemetery of Clamart, and he himself in his turn was to pass, in 1795, from the Pantheon into the sewers.

The National Assembly seemed to have expired with this one man. None dared for several days speak where he had spoken. When a state question was raised, their eyes turned mechanically to the place he had left empty. It seemed as if in thought they solicited the invisible orator to ascend the tribune and enlighten the nation. Often there was seen in his place a branch of oak lying, and renewed by his admirers and friends, in token of remembrance and mourning. The Assembly, which had not felt his presence, felt his absence, and hastened to end the Constitution, and to go back into silence, after the silence of such a voice.

DANTON.

1759—1794.

DANTON sprang from the middle classes and from amidst the very heart of the people. His family were honest, true, and industrious proprietors of an ancient name and upright habits, and settled at Arcis-on-Aube, possessing a rural domain in the neighbourhood of that little town. They belonged to that number of retiring but esteemed families who have the soil for their basis, husbandry for their chief occupation, and who give their sons a thorough moral and literary education, and who also prepare them for the liberal professions of society. Danton's father died young. His mother married again a manufacturer of Arcis-on-Aube, who owned and managed a cotton factory. One may still see, near the river outside the town, in a charming situation, the house, half city-like, half rustic, and the garden, on the banks of the Aube, where Danton's childhood was passed.

His step-father, M. Ricordin, attended to his education with the same care as if he had been his own son. The child was frank and communicative. They loved him notwithstanding his plain face and turbulent nature, for his ugliness beamed with intelligence, and his impetuosity was calmed and repented of at the least caress from his mother. He studied at Troyes, the capital of Champagne. Rebellious at discipline, idle at work, loved by his masters and school-fellows, his quick understanding equalled, in the twinkling of an eye, the most assiduous there. His instinct enabled him to dispense with reflection. He learned nothing, he guessed everything. His companions called him Catilina. He accepted this name, and sometimes played with them at seditions and tumults which he either created or calmed by his harangues, as if he were rehearsing at school the actions of his after-life.

M. and Madame Ricordin, already advanced in years, gave to him his father's modest fortune when his education was over. He went to Paris to finish his study of the law, and purchased the office of parliamentary advocate. He practised little and without much display. He despised lawyers' tricks. His mind and his words bore equally for the great causes of the people and the throne. The Constituent Assembly began to agitate them. Danton, intent and eager, was impatient to join in it. He earnestly sought those great men whose words were agitating France. He connected himself with Mirabeau. He joined him-

self to Camille Desmoulins, Marat, Robespierre, Pétion, Brune, since become a marshal, Fabre d'Eglantine, the Duke d'Orléans, Laclos, Lacroix, and all the illustrious agitators and underlings who were stirring up Paris. He passed his days in the tribunes, at the Assembly, in walking about, in the *cafés*, and his nights at the clubs. A few lucky words, some short speeches, some sudden bursts of mysterious talent, and above all his hair, which resembled a horse's mane, his mighty gestures, and his thundering voice, rendered him remarkable. But beneath these purely physical qualities of the orator select men perceived a depth of good sense and an instinctive knowledge of the human heart. Beneath the agitator they foresaw the statesman. Danton, in fact, read history, studied the ancient orators, exercised himself in true eloquence, that which enlightens whilst it impassions, and cut out for himself a part far above that which he actually filled. He asked from the movement but to give him a sufficient lift that later would enable him to rule it.

He married Mademoiselle Charpentier, daughter of a lemonade-seller on the Quai de L'Ecole. This young woman gained through affection an ascendency over him, and insensibly led him from the excesses of his youth to more regular and domestic habits. She extinguished the violence of his passions, but she possessed no power to extinguish the one that survived all others, the ambition of a great destiny. Danton lived quietly in a small apartment in the Cour du Commerce, near to where his father-in-law lived, in studious mediocrity, and only received a limited number of

friends, who admired his talent and attached themselves to his fortune. The most persevering were Camille Desmoulins, Pétion, and Brune. From these conventicles issued forth the signals for great seditions. The secret supplies from the court then came to tempt the cupidity of the chief of the youthful revolutionists. He did not refuse them, and made use of them at the same time for exciting or moderating the agitations of opinion. He had two sons by this first marriage, which by his death were left orphans in their very cradle, and who received his moderate fortune at Arcis-on-Aube.* These two sons of Danton, frightened at the noise caused by their name, still live retired on a small property belonging to the family which they cultivate themselves. They have wrapped in an honest and laborious obscurity their father's fame. Like Oliver Cromwell's son, they loved all the more the retirement and quietness of life, from their name having had too sinister a celebrity, and re-echoed too stormily throughout the world.

Danton, whose ambitious instincts discovered the good fortune of the Girondins, attached himself at first to their party; but he was especially the man most fitted for the commune of Paris. After the insurrection of the 10th August, for which he conceived the plan and gave the impulse, he was named Minister of Justice.

The entire interval between the 10th August and

* This must be an error in the original, as Danton did not leave his sons in infancy.

the 20th of September was wholly Danton's government. Ruling in the commune which he served, fomenting and directing their wills, he brought back to the council of ministers the supreme power he had exhausted at the Hotel de Ville. Danton was the only statesman of the executive power. His, also, was its only voice. None of these men of letters, grown old in chancery or in offices, understood how to speak the marked language of passion. Danton had acquired it in his long practice of seditions and disturbances. The people knew his voice. He stirred up or appeased the street by a gesture. He confounded the Assembly. He spoke there less as a minister than as a powerful mediator, who protects and restrains. His counsels were orders. Leaning on his popularity, he came to return, in thundering but obscure and curt terms, his decree from the body of the people to the bar. He hastened to join in the secrets of his conventicles and the intrigues of his agents, or in the private committees of the commune. The amazement created by his superiority began to show itself, the correctness of his mind, the energy of his patriotism, the strength of his counsels, the burning fire of his soul had placed all parties in his power. He held all the wires, and played them so as occasionally to reveal, and at other times to conceal, the hand that worked them. He did not disguise his contempt for Roland. He gave the eye and hand that directed the administration to his colleagues. He directed the war department, financial affairs, and the affairs of the interior, and all secret negotiations with foreign countries. On returning home, Roland would

grumble and complain quietly to his wife at the impertinence and at the universality of attributions Danton appropriated to himself. Humiliated by the superiority of his colleague, and terrified at his perception, Roland felt that the 10th of August had slipped through the fingers of his party, and that in giving an auxiliary in the person of Danton, the Girondins had given themselves a master.

Danton, however, neglected nothing to add the power of fascination over Roland to that of intimidation. He endeavoured to please his wife, whose ascendency over her husband he was well aware of. Madame Roland saw Danton's presence in the executive power with that delicate and instinctive repugnance peculiar to her sex. That tribune, without breeding, manners, or principles, stood, according to her, as a humiliating concession of the Girondins to fear. "What disgrace!" she said to her confidants, "that the council is defiled by that Danton, whose reputation is so bad!" "What can you expect?" replied Brissot to her, "we must take strength where it exists." "It is easier," she replied, "not to invest such men with power than prevent their abusing the use of it."

Nevertheless, she received at her house almost daily the young minister in the beginning of his administration, sometimes a little before the hour for the meeting of the council, which Danton anticipated in order to converse with her; sometimes at the friendly dinners that she gave to a few guests for the sake of

talking over public affairs. Danton used to take Camille Desmoulins and Fabre d'Eglantine with him there. Danton's conversation breathed of patriotism, devotedness, and the ardent desire of unity of purpose with his colleagues. His words, the tone of his voice, the appearance of sincerity, and, so to speak, the serenity of his enthusiasm, acted as a spell for the moment over Madame Roland; she was inclined to accuse rumour of calumny, and to believe that man to possess the unbridled virtues of liberty. But when she looked in his face she reproached herself for her indulgence. She could not attach to that face the idea of a good man. "I never saw," she said, "anything that so thoroughly characterizes unrestrained brute passions and unbridled licentiousness, partially concealed beneath an affectation of frankness, geniality, and good nature. My fancy, which delights in allotting parts to people, invariably presents Danton to me, dagger in hand, urging on a band of assassins by his voice and gesture, who are more timid and less ferocious than himself; or else, satisfied with his misdeeds, pointing out, by the gesture of Sardanapalus, the cynic voluptuousness in which his mind reposed from crime."

Hardly raised to power by the catastrophe of the 10th of August, Danton, despoiling his part as agitator, showed himself at the very height of the crisis. By his liberality he gained over all the ambitious underlings, greedy both of gold and influence, whom he had for long elbowed in the clubs. He formed himself a party of all thirsting for fortune. Mercenary himself, he well knew the power of venality. Without the least shame

he procured himself means. He organized corruption amongst the patriots. Not satisfied with a hundred thousand francs of secret funds, which was assigned to each minister the day after the 10th of August, he claimed for himself, without giving any reason, a fourth of two millions of the private expenditure that the Assembly granted to the executive power for the purpose of acting with foreign cabinets and working the public mind. He even forced Lebrun and Servan to give him over a portion of the funds assigned to their ministries. He sent muster-masters to the armies paid out of these funds, and chose amongst the men of the commune those most bought over to his interests. The public treasury paid Danton's proconsuls.

We must well understand in this life of Danton's his participation in the massacres of September. The deed accomplished, all the world was bathed in its blood. After having for long cast it on a sudden and irresistible movement of the people through rage, they attempted to circumscribe the crime to the smallest number of actors possible. History does not possess this obligingness. The idea belonged to Marat, the accepting and responsibility of it to Danton, the execution to the council of overseers, the complicity to many, the cowardly toleration to almost all. The most courageous, feeling their inability to prevent assassination, feigned ignorance, so as neither to be obliged to approve nor condemn it. In Danton's mind it was a political *coup d'Etat*. Danton argued over the crime

before giving orders for it. It was as easy for him to prevent as to permit it. He hid from himself its atrocity: "We will not assassinate," he said in his last conference with the council of overseers, "we will judge; none that are innocent shall perish." Danton desired three things: the first, to shake off the people, and so compromise them in the cause of the Revolution, that they dared not turn back, and that they should cast themselves on the borders, all stained with the royalists' blood, without other hope than victory or death; the second, to carry terror into the heart of the royalists, the aristocrats, and the priests; the last and the third, to intimidate the Girondins, who commenced murmuring against the tyranny of the commune, and to show those weak creatures that if they did not make themselves the instrument of the people they might become their victims.

But Danton, by a more theoretic and less personal cause, was driven to shed blood—his character. He had the reputation of energy, and he had the conceit for it. He wished to show it off in such a way as would astonish both his enemies and friends. He took crime for genius. He contemned those who stopped at anything, even wholesale assassination. He admired his own contempt for remorse. He consented to be the phenomenon of the revolutionary movement. There was pride in his misdeeds. He believed that his act would lose its true colouring in being purified by intention and by distance, and that when seen in perspective, it would aggrandize his name, and that he would be the Colossus of the Revolution. He was mis-

taken. The farther political crimes are removed from the passions that instigated them, the lower and darker do they seem to the eyes of posterity. History is mankind's conscience. The cry of that conscience will be Danton's condemnation.

Danton was punished on the moment. He failed in grasping and retaining the part of a statesman from his want of the morality of ambition and the innocence of ambition. Great and dreaded by the fame of his crimes, he did not close his eyes to the repugnance his name inspired around him. He could only conquer this feeling of public disgust by fresh crimes, or by a voluntary disappearance from off the scene for a certain period. Fresh crimes? He had not the desire for them. The blood of September had been too bitter for him to wish to spill more. Danton at bottom had a human heart, perverted, but not unfeeling. His cruelty had been a spasm of passion rather than the satiating of a wicked spirit. It was his system had caused him to sacrifice, not his nature. He did not admit this as yet publicly, but he owned it to his wife. He repented of it. Like Sylla, he meditated a voluntary and instantaneous disappearance from power. He scorned his rivals sufficiently to abandon the position to them. "Do you see these men," he said one evening to Camille Desmoulins, in speaking of the Girondins, Robespierre, and Marat in one of those friendly outbursts, when his pride frequently betrayed the secrets of his soul, "do you see these men? There is not one amongst them that is

worth one of Danton's dreams even! Nature never cast but two beings into the mould of statesmen capable of managing the Revolution: Mirabeau and myself. After us, she destroyed the mould. These men are mere chatterers, who waste time in setting their words, and who go off to sleep on their applause. Do you think I am going to contend and dispute with them the tribune and ministry? Undeceive yourself. I am going to place myself at the side, and leave them with their incapability to the chaos of their thoughts and the difficulties of the government. The greatness of events will crush them. For me to be disencumbered of them, I only require themselves."

DANTON, foreseeing anarchy and dreading Robespierre, formed an alliance offensive and defensive with Dumouriez against their common enemies. One glance had sufficed the hero of Valmy to judge of the Girondins. "They are denaturalized Romans," he said to Westermann, his confidant. "The Republic as they look at it is but the romance of a clever woman. They become intoxicated with fine words, while the people become intoxicated with blood! There is but one man here, that is Danton." From that day forth Dumouriez and Danton secretly harmonized all their ideas. These two men, henceforth united, had, however, a last interview with the Girondins at Madame Roland's. One might fancy that instinct of the future warned them of the dangers of their rupture, and that they sought reconciliation. Madame Roland shaded over the gulf that

separated the two parties with deceptions and infatuations. Vergniaud held out his honest, liberal hand to Danton's repentant hand. Louvet covered Robespierre and Marat with sarcasm, and held them up to the derisive laughter of his friends and to the contempt of his rival. Dumouriez gave an account of his active service, and promised in the spring to give Belgium to the Republic, if the Republic would only live till then. Their hearts began to expand. Enthusiasm for their country for a moment carried away these beings to an inaccessible region—to the divisions of the parties. But each time they fell back on the ground of reality and on the question of the day, they there found again the blood of September. Danton atoned for it by his embarrassment. By their horror the Girondins accused him. They avoided coming in contact with him. They separated in regretting each other, but they separated for ever.

Danton, at one time at the Convention, at another in the camp, by his vehemence of character raised himself above the two parties, drove the people to the frontiers by his voice and gesture, and seemed to command unity in the Convention, in order to concentrate all energies against foreign countries. For the third time he had gone off to the army in order to give confidence to the wavering troops.

Learning by a letter from his brother-in-law, Charpentier, of his wife's illness, he left Condé with all haste, to be back and receive the last sigh of the

companion of his youth. But death had got there before him. In getting out of the carriage at the door of his house, they told him his wife had just expired. They wished to take him away from that sad sight; but Danton, who under the impetuosity of his political passions, and beneath the excesses of his life, entertained a tenderness mingled with respect for the mother of his two children, dispersed his friends, who endeavoured to prevent his entering the house, ascended to the room in a distracted state, threw himself towards the bed, raised the shroud, and covered the half-cold body of his wife with kisses and tears, and passed the whole night in lamentations and sobs.

Danton at this period still held frequent conferences with Guadet, Gensonné, and Vergniaud; he evidently leaned towards the party these men belonged to; whose lucidity, eloquence, and customs promised a less anarchical government to the Republic within, and more imposing without. His conduct with this party was daily more considered, because of his private inclinations. Incessantly attacked by the young Girondins, Danton let their insinuations against him pass by unnoticed. He pretended not to hear. He never replied. Whether from magnanimity or prudence he repressed his anger, and continued to refuse all combat that the ill-advised amongst the Gironde incessantly offered him. From day to day Danton displayed more than ever the genius of a statesman. Above all a man of action, he brought the Girondins the power of will and unity,

which was wanting in them; he had the people's heart, whereas Vergniaud and his friends had the ear only: he would have given the mob to the Girondins, who already had the proprietors with them; united, they would have crushed out anarchy in the heart of France, by raising the national soil, and launching the Revolution beyond the frontiers. Danton had the instinct for this mission; he bitterly regretted the obstinacy of Roland's friends in estranging themselves from him. "Their hatred to me will be their destruction, and perhaps may destroy me after them!" he said to the negociators who interposed between them and him; "the idiots, they do not know what they are repulsing!" But notwithstanding the oft-attempted reconciliations by the moderate party of the Gironde, they had always failed. Danton's past, struck his genius with barrenness; his having been an accomplice with the executioners pursued him, and through him pursued the Republic.

Robespierre withdrew from Danton, who was suspected of being an accomplice in Dumouriez's treacheries. Legendre undertook to reconcile them. They met together at his table. Danton, who had in his character that frankness of power and hatred which easily softens men of violent tempers, was the first to advance towards Robespierre, and held out his hand to him. Robespierre withdrew his, and remained during the whole repast under constraint and in silent observation. At the end of dinner, he let a few words

escape him that cut both ways, and which, without directly pointing out Danton, expressed suspicion and contempt for men who could only see in revolutions bloody ascents to fortune, and in victories their plunder. This was but a too pointed allusion to the suspicions of extortions which weighed on Danton's conscience and the recollections of September. Danton replied by a few sarcastic remarks on men who took their conceit for virtue and their cowardice for moderation. These two rivals separated with greater bitterness and greater antipathy to each other than before this meeting. Danton cast himself afresh amongst the Girondins, and stooped to the extent of imploring amnesty for the past. Meilhaud, a deputy of his party, begged his friends to profit by his inclinations to attach that Colossus to them, who carried with him popularity and victory.

One day, having met Danton in a committee of the Convention, he conversed with him. Marat crossed the room, whispered a few words to Danton, and withdrew. "The wretched being!" said Danton to Meilhaud; "blood, blood, always blood; all he wants is blood! Let us go-out of this! These men cause me horror!" And he drew Meilhaud into the Tuileries gardens. Meilhaud, seeing his friend oppressed by remorse and his mind ready to receive counsels of moderation, showed him that Marat was disgracing his politics, and that Robespierre, after having worn out his popularity, would threaten, to his very life; he showed him the need the Republic stood in of a powerful hand to grasp affairs, which would give at the same time a

check to the populace, an impulse to the nation, direct the Convention, and would crush—as obnoxious reptiles—Marat in his blood and Robespierre in his conceit. "You are that man," he added, "decide on being for us, and we will forget the past and follow you; your ambition will be the saving of the country." Danton listened without repugnance, and held his tongue as a man who is deliberating with himself. His look questioned Meilhaud's to see if the Girondin had in his heart what he expressed by his lips. "If I could trust to it!" he said, with a sigh. "In whose name do you speak?" "In the name of those," replied the Girondin, "who despise Marat and detest Robespierre as much as you do." "And who told you I detested Robespierre?" "Who told me? your interest! Robespierre has already whispered evil words against you; if you do not warn him, he will warn you." Danton again reflected for a moment; then with a despairing gesture, and which pains the very soul: "Do not let us speak more about it," he said, "it is impossible! your friends have no confidence in me. I should lose myself for them, and they would then hand me over to our common enemies. The die is cast, let death decide!".

Danton was repugnant to the Girondins on account of his violent actions, and to Robespierre on account of his immorality. The fear he inspired alone protected him against scorn. He audaciously braved his bad reputation. He paraded licentiousness under the cloak of patriotism. Surrounded by corrupted and servile men, he had a court and courtesans. Hébert,

Fabre, Merlin, Chabot, Lacroix, Westermann, Brune, Bazire, and Camille Desmoulins sat at his table. From conspiracies they passed to pleasure. They gave to the Revolution the character of a patriotic orgie. Poetry, art, music, easy love, were relaxations to Danton from application to business and the heat of eloquence. The voluptuous indifference and the atheism that has no morrow was the philosophy of these meetings. They were the disciples of Helvetia, practising the moral of pleasure on the ruins of an empire.

Danton had, moreover, bought and furnished a country-house on the borders of the Seine, on the little hill of Sèvres. There, imitating Mirabeau, he often retired with his most intimate confidants to meditate on strokes of policy.

From the time of his wife's death he had suffered from loneliness. Already his mind, quickly satiated with everything, wearied of these sensual pleasures, and began to dream of a pure attachment. A young girl, of an unblemished family, and of great beauty, had attracted his attention and fixed his choice. Her name was Louise Gély. She was 16 years of age. He thought of marrying her. His first wife, when dying, herself pointed her out to Danton as a fit person to act as mother to his children. Danton was only 33. He desired to withdraw from the turmoil, and re-make for himself domestic happiness. The influence of this love, the desire to purify himself, in the eyes of his affianced bride, from his contact with Robespierre and Marat, the necessity of settling the Revolution in order to settle his own destiny, were amongst the motives

which at that moment were driving Danton towards the Girondins; the side of these eloquent and moderate men reinstated him in his own. The determined notion of rejoining them pursued him; even after he had given it up, he came back to it incessantly as to a regret or presentiment.

MADEMOISELLE DE GÉLY'S father had been an usher in the parliament. Danton's patronage had obtained for him a lucrative place in the office of the Minister of Marine. The family retained a sincere gratitude for this benefit. But if Danton's renown had its bright side, it also had its dark one. The young girl's mother long refused her consent to the marriage. She made bitter accusations against Danton for his conduct during the days of September, and also for his vote on his king's trial. Danton humiliated himself before this woman, admitted his errors during the first crisis of the Revolution, attributed them to the ardour of his patriotism and his youth, showed a sincere repentance at having voted for the death of Louis XVI., imputed the vote to the stress of circumstances, and to the conviction he felt of the impossibility of saving the king. He declared that the excesses of the demagogues inspired him with increased horror from day to day; that the establishment of the Republic in the midst of such corruption appeared to him a chimera, and that all his secret efforts had for long tended towards the re-establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy. The frank and sorrowful expression

which burst forth in Danton's admission, softened the Gély family, and the young girl was given to him.

The love which Danton's betrothed inspired him with, was to push his compliance still farther. He consented to give that religious character to his union that the belief and pious customs of the family in whose bosom he was about to enter exacted. At the very moment when the ceremonies of the Catholic Church were the most proscribed, and its ministers most persecuted, Danton suffered his marriage to be celebrated in the room and through the ministry of an unsworn priest, named M. de Kéravenan, who subsequently died as Curé of Saint-Germain des Près. Before the ceremony Danton passed into the private room of the priest, and kneeling at his feet, performed the act of confession, or pretended to do so.

The immense fortune he was supposed to have, and which had been attributed to his extortions in Belgium, seemed disproved by the small jointure he gave his new wife. He brought only a marriage portion of 30,000 francs in assignats, which soon after produced only 12,000 francs. His sole marriage gift to his wife was a purse containing 50 louis-d'or.

It was at this moment that Danton with much secrecy brooded over in his thoughts the disgust he felt for the Republic and the Restoration,—by the army of constitutional monarchy, by the Orleans family. A few days after his marriage he asked his wife if she had spent the 50 louis he had given her on her

wedding day. "No," replied his young wife, "I kept them to give them to you in a moment of need." "Well! lend them to me," said Danton, "I require them for a purpose that to you alone I can reveal." He then confided to her that a plot was already ripe for the modification of the Republic, and to tear the government away from anarchy; that a movement in Paris, coinciding with a movement of the army, would soon proclaim the necessity for the centralization of power, and call the Duke d'Orléans to the throne of the Revolution; that all that was wanting to this plan was the consent and concurrence of the Duke d'Orléans himself, who was then absent from Paris; that it was necessary to send a safe and discreet agent to sound the prince; that he had chosen for that mission his secretary named Niger, and that the 50 louis were destined to pay his journey.

The 50 louis were given by Madame Danton to her husband. Niger left. The Duke d'Orléans refused his co-operation and name to an enterprise that seemed to him either wrong or premature. Danton postponed the movement, but not the idea.

The Girondins' fall disconcerted Danton. Dragged in spite of himself into the struggle, he would have wished that victory had limited itself to humbling them. He was far from conspiring against the death of rivals, whom he admired the most and feared the least in the Convention. He had gained the advance of them in popularity. That victory satisfied him. His heart

leaned to their side. The Girondins were to him one of the equilibrium weights he had hoped to establish in the Convention for his own benefit, in bearing himself personally, sometimes towards the mountain, sometimes towards the plain. No other balance was more likely since the triumph of the Commune. It was necessary to be either the proscriber or the proscribed. Danton was equally averse to either part. Plunged in the ecstacy of an attachment with which his young wife, whom he had lately married, inspired him, seeking rest, humiliated by the reputation he had for bloodshed, and wishing to redeem by amnesties and by the natural generosity occasioned by the present state of his heart, Danton would not put a stop to his domestic happiness, and if not give up, at least delay his ambition. Tired of being terrible, he desired to be loved!

The Mountain, in truth, loved him. In a crisis he was the light; in tumults, the voice; in action, the hand; but since Marat had disappeared from the Mountain, Danton found Robespierre there again, a more respected rival, more sedate than Marat. Although Robespierre paraded the highest esteem for him, and consulted him even in difficult conjunctures, Danton did not disguise from himself that this deference was only an homage, and that as long as Robespierre lived, none other than the idol of the Jacobins would be the first in the Republic. And Danton preferred to disappear rather than be second. His ambition was less than his pride. He could obliterate himself, but he would not be driven away. He trusted

to luck and his genius to reinstate him in his right place, that is to say, at the head of the Revolution.

And more, Danton had reached, for the moment at least, that state of moral weariness which arrests and lessens sometimes the impetuosity of the most violent passions, when they are not sustained by the all-powerfulness of a disinterested idea. A man of passion and not of theory, he was subject to the weaknesses of nature. Individual passions weary and wear out; public passions never. Robespierre had this advantage over Danton, that his passion would never tire because it was not personal. Danton was a man, Robespierre an idea.

Danton had also for some time surprised his friends by the languor and incoherence of his resolutions. His designs spoke of the disorder and discouragement of the mind that looks back, that has more power for regretting than for willing, and can be resigned rather than act; certain symptoms of the decline of ambition, which foretell the decline of the destiny in public men. "Wretched Girondins!" he sometimes exclaimed amidst inward sighs, "they have cast us into the gulf of anarchy; they have been submerged, and so shall we be in our time. Already I feel the waves a hundred feet above my head."

In this state of mind Danton deserted the Jacobin's tribune, which was incessantly occupied by Robespierre, spoke rarely to the Cordeliers, and was silent at the Convention. He seemed to abandon the Revolution to

the stream, and to sit himself down on the borders to see the wrecks pass by and await the return of public opinion. But Danton had been too great to be forgotten. Forgetfulness only saves the mediocrity.

The Revolution, dissatisfied, was embittered against him and his friends. Legendre, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre D'Eglantine, and Chabot, had, like himself, become suspected by the Cordeliers and Jacobins. They secretly accused these men of bad reputations, of halting, of lukewarmness, of enriching themselves by plunder, of having dealings with foreign bankers, of kindness to the vanquished, of sheltering the treacheries of the generals by an interested indulgence, of imitating the vices of the aristocracy, of softening the customs of the people, of substituting mercenariness for integrity in the jurisdiction of the government, and of transforming Spartans into Sybarites, in order to form a faction of corrupted men, the worst of factions in a Republic, that could only be founded on liberty and virtue.

THESE reproaches caused Danton to smile with contempt, and even inspired a secret pride within him. He made no boast of austerity, he had not the hypocrisy of disinterestedness; he rather displayed his weaknesses than hid them. He reckoned more on remaining in obscurity. Nature had delivered him, by death, from the superiority of Mirabeau; the dagger had relieved him of Marat; the 31st of May had lightened to him the superior eloquence of Vergniaud; chance

might yet free him from the rivalry of Robespierre. Time flies swiftly in revolutions. It suffices to place oneself on the road, for it to bring you at its own time all that fortune can have to give. Thus instinctively reasoned Danton.

It was at this period that Danton, urged by his young wife and new family to separate his cause and his name from the cause and name of the terror which began to take root in the heart of all good citizens, decided on quitting the scene, to fly from Paris, and retire to Arcis-on-Aube. Danton was too well versed in the mysteries of the human heart not to understand that this retreat at such a moment was an act too humble or too proud for a man of his importance in the Republic. To separate from the Convention in the crisis of its dangers and violences, was to declare that he felt himself useless to the country, or to declare that he would not accept responsibility with the government. Such a position was an abdication or a threat; Danton knew it. Also, he disguised, under excuses of weariness and exhaustion of strength, the true reasons of his absence. He alleged, also, the necessity of presenting his new wife to his mother and step-father, M. Ricordin, who still lived.

The principal reason of his withdrawal, a reason which he owned to his wife and those near him in the familiarity of home discussions, was the horror he felt at the approaching judgment of Marie-Antoinette. This murder of an imprisoned woman was repugnant to Danton's feelings; he had often sworn he would save the heads of women and children. He had pro-

posed sending the queen and her sister to Austria. Under contemptuous words he had hidden the real interest these weaponless victims had inspired him with. He wished to wash his hands of the blood of this woman they were about to spill.

Before leaving Danton had a private interview with Robespierre. He humbled himself so far in the presence of his rival as to own to him his downheartedness about public affairs. He asked him to protect him during his absence against the slanders that the Cordeliers would not cease to spread against his patriotism and his integrity. Robespierre, pleased at the deference, and at the removal of the only man that could balance him in the Republic, took care not to retain Danton. The two rivals, apparently friends, swore to each other mutual esteem and a constant support. Danton left.

Danton lived in his rural retreat at Arcis-on-Aube, occupied alone with his love, the care of his young children, the careful watching of his domestic interests, the pleasure of again seeing his mother, the friends of his youth, and his paternal home. He seemed to have entirely divested himself of the weight and even recollection of public affairs. He never wrote a letter. He never received one from Paris. The thread of all his toils was cut. One single deputy of the Convention sometimes came to see him: he was the deputy Courtois, a countryman of his own, who owned some mills at

Arcis-on-Aube. Their conversations revolved on the dangers of the country.

Danton, in his private discussions with his wife, his mother, and M. Ricordin, did not disguise his deep regret at the revolutionary excesses into which the violence of his passions had drawn his name and hand. He endeavoured to clear himself from all complicity in the September massacres. He spoke of those days no longer as he had spoken on the day following, in these words—"I looked my crime full in the face, and I committed it;" but as a fit of patriotic frenzy to which the scoundrels of the Commune had driven the people into, that he did not feel the strength to prevent, and that he was obliged, whilst abhorring it, yet to submit. He did not either conceal his hope of again taking possession of the influence due to his political genius, when the existing convulsions had worn out the petty geniuses and the feeble characters then reigning in the Convention. He spoke of Robespierre as a dreamer, who was at times cruel, at times virtuous, and always chimerical. "Robespierre drowns himself in his ideas, he does not understand how to manage men." He did not believe in the duration of the Republic. "It requires," he sometimes said, "several human generations to pass from one form of government to another. Before having a town, have townsmen!"

He read much Roman historians. He wrote also a great deal, but he burnt what he wrote. He would leave no other trace of himself but his name.

Danton had voluntarily withdrawn himself from the Committee of Public Safety, whether to destroy the envy which was beginning to find him too powerful, or whether to peacefully enjoy that repose which was dearer to him than ambition. Love, study, friendship, a few rare labours for the Convention, some slow intrigues, and some prospects, too unveiled, of returning to power, occupied his days. He often gathered together, at Sèvres, his friends Phillippeaux, Legendre, Lacroix, Fabre d'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Bazire, Westermann, and a few political people of the Mountain. These men, who were but joyous guests, were taken for conspirators. Danton, but little discreet in speech, gave vent to censures bitter and sanguinary against the government. Too timid to overthrow a dictatorship, too bold for a man not yet prepared for attacking it, he assumed the manner of a patient conspirator, who holds the power in his grasp of destroying all, but who will not make use of it. He pretended to leave the Committee of Public Safety to itself, in order that it might give proof of its insufficiency, and go to the point when he would think fit to stop it. "France thinks she can do without me; we shall see!" he often said.

He did not manage Robespierre, who had always seemed to him a metaphysician draped in his virtue, embarrassed in his systems, and now *wallowing in blood*. "Danton," said Fabre d'Eglantine to him one day, "do you know what they accuse you of? They say, you only sent forth the chariot of the Revolution to enrich yourself, whilst Robespierre has

remained poor in the midst of the treasures at his feet of the overturned monarchy." "Well," replied Danton, "do you know what that proves? That I love money, and Robespierre loves blood! Robespierre," he added, "fears money, for it dirties the hands." They said that Danton had caused considerable sums of money to be granted by the Convention to the Committee of Public Safety, in order to sully Robespierre's incorruptibility with the suspicions he had laid on him. Lacroix and he, they said, had brought back rich spoils from their missions in Belgium. Not wishing to possess them in their own names, they lent them, they added to a former manageress of the court theatres, Mademoiselle Montansier. She made use of them in her name, but for their benefit, in building the Opera-house. It was believed, also, that a few of the diamonds stolen from the crown out of the royal closet had remained in the hands of one of Danton's agents. From the time that the Committee of Public Safety was governed by the hand of the executioner, Danton pretended a horror of blood, and endeavoured to give to his party the title of the party of mercy. After having sought popularity by severity, he followed it up by magnanimity. He made signs of intelligence to the victims, and stood forth as an avenger for the future. He whispered to Camille Desmoulins his invectives against terror and his allusions against Robespierre. He made a faction of humanity. This faction was a lasting accusation against the Committee of Public Safety, and above all against Collot-d'Herbois,

Billaud-Varennes, and Barrère, inspirers or instruments of the system of terror. From the moment that such a government had an accuser in a man like Danton, that government became threatened. Under this government, of which the sole strength was in remaining merciless, every call to pity was a call to insurrection.

The imminence of a collision between Robespierre and Danton was evident to the eyes of the intelligent Mountaineers. Driven to decide between these two men, their heart was with Danton, their logic with Robespierre, but if they must choose, they would follow Robespierre whilst mourning Danton. They hoped yet to preserve them both.

Some officious negociators endeavoured to bring about an explanation between them. Robespierre did not refuse. He still sincerely hoped to find Danton sufficiently innocent not to cause his downfall. An interview was agreed on between the two chiefs. It took place at Charenton, at a dinner given by Panis, their common friend. The guests, few in number, and animated by an earnest wish to prevent that great tearing asunder of the Republic, took care to avoid in the beginning of their conversation all topics of dissension that could call forth bitter feelings. They succeeded. The beginning of the repast was cordial. Danton was open. Robespierre was calm. They augured well of this reconciliation without violence between two men whose individual dispositions could allay the conflict between two parties.

Nevertheless at the conclusion of dinner, whether the presumptuous Danton saw in Robespierre's presence a symptom of weakness, or that too much wine had loosened his tongue, or that his pride could not conceal the contempt he felt for Robespierre and his friends, everything changed its aspect. A dialogue, at first painful, then bitter, and at last threatening, was established between the two speakers: "We two hold peace or war for the Republic," said Danton; "evil be to him who declares it! I am for peace, I desire union, but I will not give my head to the thirty tyrants." "Who do you call tyrants?" said Robespierre. "There is under the Republic no other tyranny than that of the country." "The country!" cried out Danton, "is it amidst a conventicle of dictators, of whom some thirst for my blood, and the rest have not the power to refuse it?" "You are mistaken," replied Robespierre, "the Committee thirsts but for justice, and only watches bad citizens. But are those good citizens who would disarm the Republic in the middle of a battle, and who boast of the amiability of forbearance, when we take on ourselves for them the odiousness and responsibility of severity?" "Is this a hint?" said Danton. "No, it is an accusation!" said Robespierre. "Your friends desire my death." "Yours desire the death of the Republic." They interposed between them. They brought them back to temperance and almost kindliness: "Not only," said Robespierre, "the Committee of Public Safety does not desire your head, but they earnestly desire to strengthen the government through the highest influence of the Mountain. Should I be here, if I wished

for your head? Would I offer my hand to him whose assassination I meditated? They sowed slander between us. Danton, take care! in taking one's friends for one's enemies, they are sometimes forced to become so. Now let us see if we cannot come to an understanding? Is it not necessary that power should be terrible when dangers are extreme?" "Yes," said Danton, "but it ought not to be pitiless. The rage of the people is an emotion. Your scaffolds are a system. The revolutionary tribune which I founded was a rampart, you make a slaughter-house of it. You strike indiscriminately." "September did not choose," said Robespierre, sneeringly. "September," replied Danton, "was an unreflected instinct, an anonymous crime that no one absolves, but that no one can punish the people for. The Committee of Public Safety sheds blood drop by drop, as if to keep up the horror and habit of executions." "There are people," said Robespierre, "who prefer shedding it in quantities. You cause as many innocent to die as guilty. Has one single man died without sentence? Has one single head been struck that the law did not condemn?" At these words Danton allowed a bitter and provoking laugh to escape his lips: "Innocents! Innocents!" he cried, "before that Committee which told the bullet to choose at Lyons, and the Loire to choose at Nantes! You are joking, Robespierre! You take the hatred that is felt for you for crime! You pronounce all your enemies guilty!" "No," replied Robespierre, "and the proof is, that you live!"

At these words Robespierre rose, and went out

with visible signs of impatience and anger. He maintained complete silence during the journey from Charenton to the Rue Saint-Honoré. Having reached the door of his house, he said to the friend who accompanied him, "You see there is no means of bringing that man back to the government. He wishes to regain his popularity at the expense of the Republic. Within, he corrupts it; and without, he threatens it. We are not powerful enough to contemn Danton, we are too courageous to fear him; we desire peace; he desires war,—he shall have it!"

He had hardly entered his room before Robespierre sent for Saint-Just. They remained closeted together during part of the night, and for long hours during the two following days. It is thought they prepared and combined in these long interviews the reports and speeches which were to burst over Danton and his friends.

Danton passed these two days at Sèvres without appearing to foresee, or without wishing to conjure, the storm by which he was surrounded. It was in vain that Legendre, Lacroix, the young Rousselin, Camille Desmoulins, and Westermann, implored him to take care of his future, and to anticipate the Committee of Public Safety either by flight or boldness. "The Mountain is yours," Legendre said to him. "The troops are yours," said Westermann to him. "The public feeling is ours," said Rousselin. "The public pity will become indignation at the sound of

your voice." Danton smiled with indifference and pride. "It is not time," he replied, "and then it would take blood,—I am tired of blood. I have enough of life, I would not wish to pay for it at that price. I would rather be executed than the executioner. Besides, they dare not attack me, I am stronger than they are!"

He said, perhaps, more than he thought. He assumed confidence in order to justify inaction; but at the bottom he did not act, because he could not. He felt it without admitting it. He went to sleep in a feigned security. He enveloped himself in his vanished popularity, as an inviolable covering for explaining the reasons of his inertness.

Saint-Just, Robespierre, Barrère, the Committee, did not deceive itself. They knew that a surprise of eloquence from Danton might disturb the Convention, and regain an ascendency, but badly crushed, over the Mountain. They wished to disarm the giant before fighting him. The chance of a sitting seemed too great for them to face. No voice at that time, not even Robespierre's, had the same attraction of tone as Danton's. Silence was more prudent and secrecy more certain. They acted as the senate in Venice did, and not as the comitia of Rome: the dungeon instead of the tribune.

The Committee of Public Safety summoned in the night a secret meeting of the members of the Committee of General Security, and the members of the Legislative

Committee. Saint-Just demanded that Danton and his principal accomplices should be arrested in the night and transferred to the revolutionary tribunal.

However, a subordinate clerk in the offices of the Committee, named Pâris, overheard a few words of Saint-Just's speech through the chinks of the door. He ran to Danton's house, he told him that his name, uttered several times in the meeting of the three councils, gave cause to fear a sinister resolution being passed against him. He offered him a safe shelter where he might let the storm blow over. Danton's young wife, rendered clear-sighted by affection, threw herself in tears at her husband's feet, and implored him by his love and that of his children to listen to this warning of fate, and to guard himself for a few days against his enemies. Whether from disbelief at the intelligence, or the mortification at avoiding death, or the weariness of living amidst conspiracies, that Cæsar found worse than death itself, Danton refused: "They will deliberate long before striking a man such as I am," he said; "they will deliberate always, and it will be I that shall surprise them." He dismissed Pâris. He read a few pages and fell asleep. At six in the morning the *gensd'armes* knocked at his door and presented the order of the Committee to him. "They dare then!" he said, crushing the order in his hand. "Well, they are bolder than I took them for!" He dressed himself and embraced his wife convulsively, reassured her as to his fate, entreated her to live, and followed the *gensd'armes*, who conducted him to the prison of the Luxembourg.

Danton's name astonished the prison. The prisoners of all factions, and especially the royalists, hastened in crowds to contemplate this great mockery of the Republic. This derision of fate was the feeling which seemed most to humiliate Danton, and which he with the utmost anxiety endeavoured to discard: "Well, yes," he said, again raising his head and affecting false merriment which contrasted with his position, "it is Danton! look at him well! The trick is well played, I admit. I never thought Robespierre would have conjured me away like this! One must know how to applaud one's enemies, when they behave like statesmen! For the matter of that, he has done well," he added, addressing himself to the royalists who surrounded him; "a few days hence I will deliver you all. I came here from the desire of ending your miseries and captivities;"—endeavouring thus by his speeches to allay the horror his name inspired, and even to win the interest of his victims.

They cast Danton and his friend Lacroix into the same cell. "To have arrested us!" exclaimed Lacroix; "who would ever have dared to foresee it?"—"I," replied Danton. "What! you knew it and did not act?" said Lacroix.—"Their cowardice reassured me," replied Danton. "I was deceived by their villany!" He asked, towards the middle of the day, to walk in the corridors like the other prisoners. The jailors dared not refuse a walk in the prison to the man who the day before held the reins of the Convention. Herault de Séchelles ran to him and embraced him.

Danton assumed carelessness and cheerfulness. "When men are guilty of foolish actions," he said to Herault de Séchelles, shrugging his shoulders, "one must learn to laugh over them." Then perceiving Thomas Paine, the American democrat, he went up to him and said sadly: "What you did for your country I tried to do for mine. I was less fortunate than you were, but not less guilty."

They did not leave much time to the accused for the consolation of mutual intercourse. The order came to shut them up in separate cells. Danton's was facing Lacroix's and Camille Desmoulins'. Incessantly pressed against the bars of his window, Danton did not cease speaking loudly to his friends, so as to be heard by the prisoners who occupied the other floors, or who walked about in the yards. His courage required spectators. His window was his tribune. A man of tumult, he was not of those natures that gather strength in silence, and that only require their conscience as a witness. He required a noisy misery, and the popularity of ill luck.

Danton, however, became calm in prison. He jested with the other prisoners through the grating. In ridiculous words he sketched the portraits of the members of the Committee. "The Republic will crush them," he said. "If I could leave my legs to the paralytic Conthon, and my virility to the incapable Robespierre, it might yet hold out a little longer. As for myself," he added, "I do not regret power, for in revolutions victory rests with the greatest villains."

At other times he made philosophical returns on the emotions of his life, and on the emptiness of ambition. "It would be better," he said, "to be a poor fisherman than to govern men!" Going back with pleasure to the happy days of his last retreat at Arcis-on-Aube, he spoke of the scenes and the rest of the country, of the calmness that contact with nature shed in the heart, of domestic happiness, of the burning love in his heart for a woman who had made him forget even his country! He grieved over the captivity of so many mothers, wives, and innocent young girls imprisoned in the Luxembourg. He pretended to be ignorant of the abuse and excess of the suspicious power of the Convention. "What!" said one of these female prisoners to Lacroix, who was walking with Danton, "you did not know of the thousands of prisoners that people the prisons? You have never met those carts with the condemned going to execution?" "No," said Lacroix, "I never came across them on their road; I never saw blood shed; it would have horrified me; Danton and I desire a republic without sacrifice."

THE action began. All the jury, selected by Fouquier-Tinville, and presided over by Hermann, were faces well known to the accused. But the eye of the Committee watched over these men and dived into their consciences. They did not expect justice from them, but death.

The people, however, who still idolized Danton, besieged the Palace of Justice. The crowd extended to

the surrounding quays, to take part in the triumph of the great patriot. Danton appeared with a somewhat theatrical dignity before the judges. The president having asked him his name, his age, and his residence: "I am Danton," he replied, "pretty well known in the Revolution. I am 35 years of age. My residence will soon be in Chaos, and my name will live in the Pantheon of History."

Hermann reproached Danton for his alliance with Dumouriez, and his secret complicity for the purpose of restoring royalty by corrupting the army, and in driving it against Paris. Danton, rising with feigned indignation, replied: "The cowards who slander me," —and giving his voice a clearness which intentionally carried it to the Committee of Public Safety,—"dare they accuse me to my face? Let them show themselves, and I will soon cover them with the ignominy which characterizes them! Beyond that," he continued, with a disorder and precipitation of words which bore witness to the ferment of his ideas, "I have said it, and I repeat it; my residence will soon be in space, and my name in the Pantheon. My head is there; it answers for all. . . . . Life is a burden to me, I long to be delivered from it! Men of my temperament are inestimable. . . . . It is on their foreheads that the seal of liberty and republican genius is imprinted in indelible characters. And it is me they accuse of having conspired with Mirabeau, with Dumouriez! Saint-Just, you will answer these calumnies raised against the people's best friend! In reading that list of horrors, I feel my whole existence shudder!"

These expressions, evidently prepared, and gathered in disconnected shreds from a troubled memory and conscience, revealed more pride than innocence. The president observed to Danton, that Marat, who was accused as he was, had defended himself otherwise, and had, refuted by proofs, coolly discussed the accusation.

"Well, then!" replied Danton, "I will descend to my justification:" then at once going off from his reasonable defence to fresh outbursts, exclaimed, "I, sold to Mirabeau, to d'Orleans, to Dumouriez! . . . Why, all the world knows that I contended with Mirabeau and defended Marat! Did I not show my real feelings when they wished to remove the tyrant out of our reach by taking him away and removing him to Saint-Cloud? Have I not caused the Cordeliers to know the necessity for their enlisting? . . . . I have all my senses about me when I provoke my accusers, when I ask to be measured with them! Let them be brought forward, and I will drive them back into chaos, from whence they ought never to have come out! Vile impostors, appear! and I will tear the mask from off you which shelters you from public vindictiveness!" . . . . The president again recalled him to the propriety and modesty of an accused. "One accused as I am," replied Danton, "who knows the meaning of words and things, replies before a jury, but never addresses it. I am accused of having withdrawn myself to Arcis-on-Aube. I reply, that at that period I declared that the French people would be victorious, or that I should no longer exist! I require, I added, laurels or death! Where, then, are the men from whom Danton borrowed energy? Since

two days the tribunal knows Danton. To-morrow I hope to sleep in the bosom of glory! . . . Pétion," he began again, immediately, as a man who had strayed, but came back to his subject, "coming out of the Commune, came to the Cordeliers. He told us the alarm-bell would ring at midnight, and that the day following would be the tomb of tyranny. They placed in my hands, when I was minister, fifty millions,—I admit it. I offer to give a faithful account of it. It was to give an impulse to the Revolution. It is true that Dumouriez tried to gain me over to his side, that he sought to flatter my ambition in proposing the ministry to me, but I told him I would not occupy such a position but to the sound of the cannon. I am spoken to also about Westermann, but I never had anything in common with him. I know that on the day of the 10th August, Westermann came forth from the Tuileries covered with the blood of the royalists, and I said that with 17,000 men, arranged according to the plan I would have given, the country might have been saved." . . .

Danton's words came so crowdedly and confusedly from his lips, that they seemed to stifle him beneath the mass and incoherence of his ideas. The real eloquence of an accused, the calm collectedness of truth, and the force of conscience were wanting in him. He tried to make up for them by action and loudness; he worked himself up to a fever, but never to genuine indignation. The convulsive movements of his face, his words uttered with rough quickness, his theatrical gesture, the foam which marked his lips, the breath which failed his respiration, all attested to his inability

to speak longer where he then was. The judges, astounded or softened, showed him some little interest, and told him that he required rest. He was then silent.

DANTON, encouraged by the interest of the people for him, resembled less an accused person than a ringleader who was giving to the mob the signal for insurrection. The windows of the tribunal were open. Danton heard the dull murmur of the multitude around the walls. He spoke in a tone to be heard beyond the enclosure. At moments he roared to such an extent that his voice reached beyond the Seine, as far as those people who were sufficiently curious to assemble on the Quay of Ferraille. The words he uttered were passed from mouth to mouth amongst the groups. "People!" cried Danton to the public, who were whispering near him, "hold your tongue! You can judge me when I have said everything. My voice ought not alone to be heard by you, but by the whole of France!" The tocsin of insurrection seemed to beat in his breast; his gesture overwhelmed the judges, the jury, and the audience. The president Hermann's bell never ceased ringing to impose silence. "Do you not hear the bell?" he said to him once. "President," replied Danton, "the voice of a man who is defending his life ought to overcome the sound of a bell."

Public favour returned to Danton. He felt it, and redoubled his assumption. The members of the Committee made a sign to the president to put an end to

the dangerous dialogue between him and the accused. The president caused the sitting to rise, and declared the debates to be ended.

RETURNED to his dungeon, awaiting the hour of his execution, Danton assumed indifference; he spoke words that he meant to survive him, like medals, with his image, cast, from the verge of the tomb, for posterity. "They think to be able to do without me," he said; "they deceive themselves. I was the statesman of Europe. They do not foresee the void that this head will leave," he said, in pressing his cheeks within the two palms of his large hands. "As for myself, I laugh at it," he added in cynical terms. "I have thoroughly taken advantage of my short existence; I have made plenty of noise on this earth; I have well relished my life; well, to sleep now!" And he made a movement with his head and arm as a man might do who was about to rest his head on a pillow.

At four o'clock the servants of the executioner came to bind the condemned men's hands, and to cut their hair. They yielded without resistance, and joined sarcastic remarks to this funereal toilet. "It is good for the fools who will look at us in the street," said Danton. "We shall appear differently before posterity." He showed no other religion than that of celebrity, and seemed only to desire to live in its memory. His immortality was the fame of his name.

DANTON ascended the scaffold after all the others. Never had he shown himself grander or more imposing in the tribune. He walked proudly on the scaffold, and seemed to take the measure of its pedestal. He looked with a pitying expression right and left on the people. He seemed by his attitude to say: "Look at me well, you will never see another to equal me." Nature, however, for a moment melted this pride. The cry of a man—torn from him by the recollection of his young wife—escaped from the dying man: "Oh, my beloved," he cried, with moistened eyes, "I shall never, then, see you again!" Then, as if reproaching himself for this return to life, he said in a loud voice: "Come, Danton, no weakness!" and turning towards the executioner: "You will show my head to the people," he said in an authoritative tone; "it is well worth it." His head fell. The executioner, obeying his last request, lifted it out of the basket and paraded it round the scaffold. The mob clapped their hands. Thus end their favourites.

Thus died in a scene before the people that man, for whom the scaffold was a stage, and who wished to die applauded at the end of the drama of his tragical life, as he had been at its commencement and in the middle of it. Nothing was wanting in him for a great man but virtue. He had the nature, the cause, the talent, the exterior, the fate, the death; but he had not the conscience.

VERGNIAUD.

1759—30th October, 1793.

BORN at Limoges, and brought up at the Jesuits' College, through the benevolence of Turgot, at that time intendant of Limousin, Vergniaud, after his studies, entered the seminary. He intended, through piousness, to consecrate himself to the priesthood; he drew back at the last moment, and returned to his family. Solitary and sad, his imagination poured forth poetry before bursting into eloquence. He trifled with his talent without knowing it. Sometimes he shut himself in his room, and imagined a multitude as audience and extemporized speeches on fancied catastrophes. One day his brother-in-law, M. Alluaud, heard him through the door; he had a presentiment of the fame of his family, and sent him to Bordeaux to study the practice of law.

The student was recommended to the president Dupaty, a celebrated writer and an eloquent speaker.

Dupaty entertained a perplexed hope of greatness for the young man; he liked him, he took him by the hand, and permitted his studying near him. There are kinsmen in genius as well as kinsmen in blood. The illustrious man constituted himself the orphan's intellectual father. Dupaty's care of Vergniaud recalled the ancient protection of Hortensius and Cicero. "I have paid out of my own purse, and I shall continue to pay for years to come, the expenses of your brother-in-law," wrote Dupaty to M. Alluaud; "I shall myself procure him some choice cases for his first appearance; he only requires time: one day he will bring great glory on his name. Help him to meet his most pressing necessities; he has not yet his gown for the courts. I am writing to his uncle to rouse his liberality; I hope we shall obtain his gown for him. Depend on me for the rest, and trust to the interest which his misfortunes and talent has inspired in me."

Vergniaud promptly justified these foreshadowings of a distinguished friendship. At Dupaty's he brought forth the rigid virtues of antiquity, as well as the majestic ways of the Roman forum; the man of position gave authority and uprightness to his word. Barely rich from his first profits at the bar, he robbed himself of it, and sold the small inheritance he obtained through his mother, to pay his dead father's debts. He bought back honour to his memory by parting with all his possessions; he reached Paris almost in want. Roger-Fonfrède and Ducos of Bordeaux, his two friends, received him at their table and beneath their roof as their guest.

He was one of those men who require little time to rise to greatness in the Assembly. They stand forth great, they stand forth alone, the day on which events give them their part to play. Vergniaud had been in Paris but a few months. Obscure, unknown, retiring, without any presentiment concerning himself, he lodged with three of his colleagues from the south in a poor apartment in the Rue des Jeûneurs; and later removed to a small house beyond the Faubourg which surrounded the Tivoli gardens. The letters he wrote to his family are full of humble descriptions of this domestic household. He had barely sufficient to exist on. He overlooked with strict economy his smallest expenditure. A few *louis*, obtained by him from his sister, seemed to him a sufficient sum to support him for a long time. He wrote for a small quantity of linen to be sent him by the cheapest way possible. He never dreamt of fortune, not even of renown. He went to the spot duty sent him. In his patriotic ingenuousness he is scared by the mission Bordeaux has imposed on him. An old-fashioned probity burst forth in the confidential effusions of this correspondence with his own people. His family had interest which they wanted the ministers to appreciate. He refused to ask anything, for fear that a request for mere justice might appear from his lips the demand of a favour. "I am bound by delicacy on this point; I myself made this resolve," he said to his brother-in-law, M. Alluaud of Limoges, who had been a second father to him.

All these private communications between Vergniaud and his sister and brother-in-law breathe simplicity;

tenderness of heart, and homeliness. The early principles of a public man are saturated in the pure soil of home morality. No trace of a desire for factions, of Republican fanaticism, or of hatred to the king, revealed itself in the inward feelings of Vergniaud. He spoke of the queen with tenderness, of Louis XVI. with pity: "The equivocal conduct of the king," he wrote towards this period, "will increase our dangers and his. I am assured he will to-day come to the Assembly. If he does not declare himself in a decisive manner, he will prepare some great catastrophe for himself. He has many efforts to make to cast into oblivion his false steps, which are regarded as treasonable." Then, further on, returning from his pity for the king to his own domestic position: "I have no money," he wrote; "my former creditors in Paris are looking for me; I pay them a little every month; house-rent is dear; it is impossible for me to pay all." This young man, whose gesture overturned a throne, had barely the place to rest his head within the empire he was about to shatter.

Vergniaud, careless as to his means of success, like all men who feel a great inward power, worked little, and trusted to chance and nature. His talent, unfortunately indolent, liked to slumber, and to give itself up to the carelessness of the age and his mind. He required shaking to rouse him out of his youthful laziness, and drive him to the tribune or council. For him, as with Orientals, there was no transition between idleness and heroism. Action raised him, but quickly wearied him. He fell back in the reverie of talent.

Brissot, Guadet, and Gensonné took him to Madame Roland's. She did not find him manly or ambitious enough for his genius. His southern habits, his literary tastes, his attraction towards a beauty less imperious, took him incessantly into the society of an actress of the Théâtre-Français, Madame Simon-Candeille. He had written for her, under another name, several scenes of a drama then celebrated, called *La Belle Fermière*. This young woman, at once a poet, a writer, and an actress, brought forth in this drama all the fascination she possessed in her mind, talent, and beauty. Vergniaud was infatuated by this life of *artiste*, music, declamation, and pleasure; he was in a hurry to enjoy his youth, as if he had a misgiving that it would soon be cut off. His habits were meditative and idle. He rose in the middle of the day; he wrote little and on scraps of paper; he rested the paper on his knees, as a man in a hurry who is contending with time; his speeches he composed slowly in his reveries, and retained them in his memory by the aid of notes; he gave a polish to his eloquence at leisure as the soldier polishes his weapons during his rest. He not only desired his blows to be mortal, but brilliant; as anxious about art as politics. The blow given, he left the rebounding of it to fate, and gave himself up once more to ease. He was not a man of every hour, but a man of great days.

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Vergniaud was a middle-sized man. His figure, robust and square, had the self-possession of the

orator's statue. One saw in him the wrestler of words; his nose was short, broad, and the nostrils raised with a proud expression; his lips, rather thick, firmly delineated his mouth; one saw they were formed to cast forth words in great multitudes, like the lips of a Triton at the opening of a large spring; his eyes were black and full of brilliancy, and seemed to stand out beneath the prominent eyebrows; his forehead, large and broad, had the polish of the mirror in which intelligence is reflected; his auburn hair waved like Mirabeau's at the movement of his head. The scars of the small-pox marked the skin of his face, like the marble chipped by the diamond-hammer, used by the cutter of stones. His pale complexion had the lividity of deep emotions. Whilst in repose, no one would have remarked him in a crowd. He might have passed by the common herd without offending and without arresting their gaze. But when his spirit diffused itself over his face, like light on a bust, the whole of his countenance took, by an ideal expression, a splendour and beauty that no feature could possess by itself. He illuminated himself by eloquence. The palpitating nerves around his eyebrows, his temples, and his lips, modelled themselves by his thoughts, and blended his expression with the thought itself: it was the transfiguration of genius. Vergniaud's light was his speech, the pedestal of his beauty was the tribune. When he came down from it, it vanished; the orator ceased to be more than a man.

His first look, his first word, placed a vast distance between the man and the orator. It was an instrument of enthusiasm which only found its worth and place in inspiration. This inspiration, attended by a serious voice and an inexhaustible eloquence, had been nourished by the purest recollections of the tribunes of antiquity. His expressions had the semblance and harmony of the most beautiful metre. Had he not been the orator of a democracy, he would have been its philosopher and poet. His talent, thoroughly democratical, forbade his descending to the language of the people, even to flatter them. He possessed only noble sentiments, like his language. He adored the Revolution as a sublime philosopher, who would ennoble the entire nation without making other victims than the prejudiced and tyrannical. He held tenets without hatreds, and the thirst of glory without ambition. Power even seemed to him a thing too real, too common for him to aspire to. He scorned it for himself, and only solicited it for his ideas. Glory and posterity were the two sole objects of his thoughts. He only mounted the tribune to see them from a greater height. Later, he saw but them from the summit of the scaffold, and he cast himself into the future, young, handsome, immortal in the memory of France, with all his enthusiasm, and a few stains already wiped away with his generous blood.

Such was the man fortune gave the Girondins for their chief. He did not condescend to become so, though he had the spirit and views of a statesman; he was too listless to be the leader of a party, and too

great to be secondary. He was Vergniaud. Of greater renown than use to his friends, he would not lead them; he immortalized them.

Vergniaud gave nothing over to emotion, nothing to ambition, nothing to fear. He had within him that power of genius which elevates itself to impartiality. He saw everything through posterity. He wrote to his friends in Bordeaux those lines of calm sadness which summed up his conduct in the Assembly. They portray the state of the country by the state of his mind: "Amidst the difficult circumstances in which I find myself, it is a necessity of my heart to open itself to you. A few men who boasted of alone having caused the 10th August, seemed to think they had the right to behave as if they had conquered France and Paris; I would not abase myself before these ridiculous despots. They call me an aristocrat. I foresaw that if the existence of the revolutionary commune were prolonged, the revolutionary movement would be prolonged also, and would cause the most horrible confusion. They call me an aristocrat, and you know the deplorable events of the 2nd September. The pillage of those who emigrated and the churches was the prey of the most scandalous plundering; I denounced them. They call me an aristocrat. On the 17th September they recommenced the massacres; I had the happiness of passing a decree which placed the lives of the prisoners under the responsibility of the Assembly. They call me an aristocrat! In the commissions, my friends and I occupied ourselves night and day with measures for

repressing anarchy, and to drive the Prussians from the territory. They threatened night and day with the sword of the assassin. The Convention was opened. It was not difficult to foresee that if it retained in its bosom the men of September, it would be disturbed by incessant broils. I denounced it. My denouncement produced no effect.

"I have never felt the slightest effect from the wretched outcry raised against me; still I say to myself: 'Perhaps these men who incessantly accuse the pretended faction of the Gironde, who, since the 10th August, instigate the use of daggers against us, are only worried by the ambition of constantly appearing in the tribune: perhaps they have the talent and good luck of serving the public cause better than we can. Do not let us, through pride, prevent the good they may do. Ah! what more can we desire than saving our unhappy country?' Then I vowed myself to silence, and shut myself up to perform committee work. Another reason keeps me silent. In the shock of individual passions, who can answer for his remaining master of the impulses of his spirit? Sooner or later one pays a tribute to human weakness; and we owe an account of all our wanderings to the Republic. Well! what do those everlasting slanderers do? They redouble their fury that they may calumniate men who have been of service to the Republic, in the Convention, among the army, and in all important places. They accuse the whole world of intrigue in order to turn aside the universal attention from their own plots. He who does not applaud massacres is an aristocrat.

He who applauds them is virtuous. They are urging us to pronounce by acclamation the fate of Louis XVI., without form, without proofs, and without judgment. They cause atrocious libels to be circulated against the Convention, and absurd panegyrics on the Duke of Orléans. In the sections they provoke fresh insurrections of the 10th August. They praise the agragrian laws. The slaughterers of the 2nd September, associates of priests, call themselves patriots, meditate and post up the lists of the proscription. They speak openly of giving themselves a head and the Republic a master. The zeal of such men asking for the death of Louis seems to me, I admit, suspicious. They desire by hurrying on a sentence, which would be in keeping with their outrages to cause us to realize the assassinations at the Abbaye.

"I write to you seldom. Forgive me. My head is often filled with painful thoughts and my heart with sad feelings. At times I have barely sufficient moral force left to fulfil my duties. Your remembrance of me is my consolation. Foreign, as you know I am, to every kind of ambition, having neither pretensions to fortune nor fame, I have created but one desire for myself; it is that one day I may be enabled to enjoy with you, in retirement, the triumph of our country and of liberty!"

THE history of Vergniaud is that of the struggle between the *Montagne* and the *Gironde*. We have related it elsewhere. In the narrative of his private life

we are compelled to touch on matters of general history to bring forward the principal scenes in which he took the initiative, and where more particularly his individuality burst forth.

It was principally he who, when the Girondins remained undecided between the abasement and fall of the throne, felt that they must themselves hurl it down, or be dragged down with it. The extraordinary commission, at which they had the majority of the number, importance, and talent, assembled a continuous meeting. The deliberation was not long. The cannon deliberated for it. The people waited. Vergniaud seized his pen, and hastily wrote down the provisional suspension of royalty. He entered and read, in the midst of profound silence, and four steps from the king, who was listening, the decree of forfeiture. The tone of Vergniaud's voice was solemn and sad, his attitude sorrowful, his gesture distressed. Whether the necessity of reading the condemnation of the monarchy imposed the decency of pity on his lips and in his heart, whether regret at the furtherance he had given to events took possession of him, and that he already felt himself the passive instrument of a fatality which demanded from him more than his conscience would consent to give, he seemed to be less declaring the victory of his party than pronouncing his own doom.

Later he made allusion to the initiative he took when he wished to save the king's life on the day of his judgment: "Courage was required on the 10th

August to attack Louis in the full possession of his power! Does it require as much to send Louis vanquished and disarmed to execution? A Cimbrian soldier entered the prison of Marius to cut his throat; frightened at the look of his victim, he ran away without daring to strike. If that soldier had been a member of the senate, do you think he would have hesitated at voting for the death of the tyrant? What courage do you see in doing an act of which a coward would be capable?"

Then he added, with a kind of prophetic intuition: "I love the glory of my country too well to suggest the Convention being influenced in so solemn an occasion by the consideration of what foreign powers may or may not do. Nevertheless, through hearing that we are acting in this judgment as by political power, I thought it would not be against your dignity nor reason to speak a moment on politics. Whether Louis lives or whether he dies, it is possible England and Spain will declare themselves our enemies; but if the condemnation of Louis XVI. is not the cause of that declaration of war, it is quite certain his death will be the pretext for it. You will overcome these new enemies, I believe; the courage of our soldiers and the justice of our cause are to me the guarantees; but what gratitude will the country owe you for having further caused oceans of blood to flow on the Continent and on the seas, and for having in its name done an act of vengeance which has become the cause of so many disasters? Dare you boast of your victories to it, for I put aside the thought of calamities and reverses; but

through the course of events, even the most prosperous, it will be exhausted by its very successes. Let us beware lest France, in the midst of her triumphs, resembles those famous Egyptian monuments which have conquered time. The stranger who passes by is astounded at their grandeur; if he wishes to enter them, what will he find? Lifeless ashes and the silence of the tomb. Citizens, he amongst you who would yield to personal fear would be a coward; but fears for the country are an honour to the heart."

This speech for a moment seemed to wrest from the Convention the life of Louis XVI. But the next day liberty listened to nothing beyond its terrors and resentment.

VERGNIAUD, who, by the declaration of forfeiture, had been the principal author of the Republic, seemed as if he ought to be its only moderator. At the reunion which, on the night of the proclamation, caused all the Girondins to assemble at Madame Roland's, and where they celebrated in a meeting, almost religious, the advent of their opinion in the world, Vergniaud showed in his attitude and in his features the careless quietude of power which reposes before and after the battle. He looked at his friends with a serene, but at the same time sad, smile. He spoke little. After supper he took his glass, filled it with wine, rose, and proposed to drink to the eternity of the Republic. Madame Roland, full of recollections of ancient times, asked Vergniaud to strew in his glass a few roses from the

bouquet she was wearing that day, according to the custom of the ancients. Vergniaud held his glass, and letting the rose leaves float in his wine, drank; then turning towards Barbaroux before sitting down: "Barbaroux," he said in an under-tone, "those are not roses, but branches of cypress we were obliged to break off and put in our wine to-night. In drinking to a Republic, the cradle of which steeps in the blood of September, how do we know but that we are drinking to our own death? Never mind," he added, "were this wine my own blood I would yet drink it to liberty and equality!" "Long live the Republic!" cried all the guests at once.

This inauspicious idea saddened but did not discourage their spirits. They were prepared to accept all from the Revolution, even death!

These presentiments of Vergniaud were but too quickly justified. The people of Paris, not knowing to whose charge they were to lay the calamities arising from the Republic, exasperated by the instigations of the Commune, cast on the Girondins the whole misfortunes of the moment. To resist this torrent of unpopularity the Girondins had nothing but the abstract power of the law. On one side a few intrepid orators made an appeal to the departments which were too distant to hear them; on the other, a whole people armed, raised by concealed instigators, and ruled by organized Jacobins, the victory was not likely to be doubtful. The Girondins, at first reassured by the

legality of their cause and the favour with which the better class of the citizens of Paris surrounded them, foresaw their ruin, and prepared their spirits less as politicians than martyrs. And yet they still loved to flatter themselves that fortune would return to them at the last moment. They provoked addresses on addresses from their departments, to place their heads under the responsibility of Paris. They thought that if the moderate members of the Convention were too timid to face with them the power of the Commune, and to crush the anarchy, those same men would be too careful of their own safety to abandon themselves, by giving over the heads of 22 of their colleagues to the ostracism and the scaffold of Marat.

Such a violation seemed to them so monstrous, that they looked on it as impossible. The vengeance of the departments was in their eyes so certain and so imminent, that it would intimidate even their assassins. Bound by a joint responsibility of thoughts and of perils with the numerous members of the *plaine* who sat between them and the *montagne*, they reckoned with secret confidence those 300 voices which on all decisive occasions had given them the majority. They believed in right, common sense, well-understood interest, and in the courage of the assemblies. They forgot envy, fear, impulse; the timorous pretexts with which weak men colour their cowardice in the face of a danger which they think to avert by delivering up victims.

Vergniaud, the strength, the pride, and the last who claimed popularity for his party, was eagerly in-

vited by all to take the principal management of the struggle; to prepare his ideas, his feelings, his words, which alone were equal to the danger; to ascend the tribune, to let his exasperated spirit burst forth in the hearing of his country; to crush the conspiracy under the law, and to render to good citizens the courage that his silence had allowed to be extinguished in every breast.

Vergniaud listened irresolute, and without reply, to the call from his friends. Too far-seeing to disguise to himself the extremity of the danger, too brave to fear death, he was also too politic and too deeply versed in history to delude himself by the various plans they suggested to him. Vergniaud was reluctant to take the responsibility of the undoing and ruin of his party, which seemed to him already consummated. In looking around him, he saw no real power on which the Republic—such as he had imagined it—could lean in order to resist anarchy. The far-off extent of his observation only let him see abysses where others thought to see outlets. His very talent discouraged him, for it only served him the better to see what was impossible. A terrible position for a superior intellect! In hopeless critical moments the limits of intelligence are blessings for the medium class of men. In leaving them illusion they leave them zeal. Vergniaud no longer had either illusion or zeal; but he preserved that stoical impassiveness which goes beyond zeal and illusion, which can see without emotion the moment of death approach, and which, in combating without hope, accepts defeat as men accept

martyrdom, with all the coolness and all the heroism of will.

VERGNIAUD had rarely been led away by the errors of his party. His eyes fixed on Europe, the great orator felt as deeply as Danton the necessity of strengthening the unity of the Republic so as to resist the dismemberment of the country. The hopeless federalism of Barbaroux, Louvet, and Madame Roland made him feel pity. He never made use of *federalism* in his speeches but as a hopeless argument fit to make anarchy itself shudder. He felt that the most virulent enemies of France could not cause anything more fatal than the voluntary dismemberment dreamt of by a few senseless beings. What he dreaded for his country through the struggle in which he was engaged with the Commune, was not so much the proscription and death of his friends, his own proscription and his own death, as the rebellion and breaking up of the departments which would follow the destruction of representation. Patriotism wholly stifled party spirit in the heart of Vergniaud. His words were only so ardent by the fire of his patriotism.

In this perplexity of spirit Vergniaud, like all men placed face to face with the impossible, asked from fate, his friends, and his enemies, but time. He had already sacrificed to time in accepting the Republic the day following the 10th of August, when he still believed, the day before, in the transitory necessity of a constitutional monarchy. He had sacrificed to time when he had,

against his conscience, voted for the death of Louis XVI. These two concessions had kept back the peril; but as the dyke keeps back the waves by accumulating and aggravating their weight, Vergniaud wished again to delay, and in ceding the government to the Montagne, would have disputed the anarchy with the people, and anticipated the rupture of Paris and the departments. Without ambition for himself, without vanity even for his name, it cost him nothing to give power over to his rivals. By nature he felt himself above those who politically might rule over him. His power was in his genius, of that they could not deprive him. In ceding power he did not think he ceded anything, not even glory; for the glory of sacrifice was in his eyes greater than that of dominion.

Vergniaud was therefore disposed for negociatory measures. But no negociation was possible. The insurrection of the people, fomented by the Commune, caused the arrest of the Girondins to be decided on. On the eve of the 31st of May the threatened deputies, fearing the snares laid that night, did not sleep in their own houses. Vergniaud alone, always unmoved and resigned to fate, had obstinately refused to take any steps for his safety. "What is my life to me?" he replied. "My blood perhaps may be more eloquent than my words in rousing and saving my country. Let them shed it, if it is to fall back on them!"

Vergniaud, as usual, trusted to chance and his genius, and would not decide on anything before the

event. His very courage was injurious to the force of his resolutions. He had too thoroughly taken death for granted to make any attempt at escaping it. Death appeared so placed for him on every road of the Revolution that he was totally indifferent as to the choice of which was to lead him to it. The strength that is born of despair brings forth only resignation. There is hope in heroism. Vergniaud was the most eloquent of citizens; he was not a combatant.

When the Convention, in striking itself, had prescribed the twenty-two, many of the Girondins escaped. Vergniaud remained on his bench, vainly waiting for the armed men who were to secure his person. Not seeing them come, he went back of his own accord to his house. *Gensd'armes* were sent by the revolutionary committee not to lose sight of him in his house.

The captivity of the Girondins imprisoned after the 31st May, carried out in its indulgence and severity the oscillations of public opinion. At first gentle, and so to speak nominal; ashamed of itself, it limited their confinement to within their own homes under the eye of a *gend'arme*. The opportunities of escape were frequent and easy. Reunited to their families, visited by their friends, attended to by their servants, provided with gold and false passports, they seemed to tempt, by these tolerant measures, their inclination to flight. The *Montagne* was more embarrassed with its victims than suspicious of them. But after the disasters of the army in the North, the success in La Vendée, the

insurrections at Calvados, Marseilles, Lyons, and Toulon, after the proclamation of terror, the sentence of Custine, the execution of the queen, and of the law against suspected people, their captivity was rendered closer. They were first cast into the Abbaye, then the Luxembourg, then the Carmes, united by the same crime, and joined together by the same fate. For long, confused with those suspected of being royalists or federalists, the Girondins found themselves associated through chance—that blind avenger of the conquered and conquerors—with the victims of their policy, the vanquished of the 10th August, the servants of royalty, the moderate party of the Revolution, the nobles, priests, and magistrates. The neutrality of prisons had called forth amongst these men that strange conjunction of position which is sometimes the sport, sometimes the revenge, and at all times the lessons of revolutions. They had met and conversed not without astonishment, but without recriminations, and without hatred. The same adversity seemed to render all parties innocent.

The Girondins, at all times inflexible in their republicanism, preserved the revolutionary attitude of their first nature. They neither pretended regret at their opinions, nor humiliation at their fall. They confounded themselves with the Convention in all their energetic acts of patriotism and of severity against the royalists. They only separated themselves from them in what they called their enthralment and their crimes. They formed in the prisons a separate society and a distinct group, which was not a rupture but a schism

in the Republic. Their names, their celebrity, their youth, and their eloquence inspired their enemies with curiosity, the prisoners with respect, and their jailors even with regard. Something of their character as the people's representatives, of their *prestige* and power, had followed them even to their dungeons. Captives, they yet reigned through the memory or admiration which surrounded them.

When their trial was decided on, they made their captivity still more secure. For a few days they shut them up in an immense house of the Carmelites in the Rue de Vaugirard, a monastery converted into a prison, and rendered sinister by the recollections and marks of blood of the September massacres. The lower stories of this prison, already filled with prisoners, only left for the Girondins a narrow space beneath the roofs of the old convent, comprising a dark passage and three low cells, opening the one into the other, and like the prison leads of Venice. No step, no hand, nor abuse of time has ever destroyed their remains. The written traces of the proscribed of all parties of the Republic were found mixed with those of the Girondins. The names of friends and of enemies, of executioners and victims, are there united on the same side of the wall.

The walls and ceilings of these rooms, covered over with a coarse cement, gave to the prisoners, instead of paper, which since their removal they had been deprived of, lapidary pages on which they could engrave their last thoughts with the point of their knives, or

write them with a pencil. These thoughts, generally expressed in short proverbial maxims, or in Latin verse —an immortal language—to this day covers the cement, and makes of these walls the last communication and the final confidences of the Girondins. Almost all written with blood, the colour is still retained. To the eyes that try to decipher them, they seem thus to impress something of the man himself who wrote them with his substance and his life. It is the martyrdom of the first Republicans bearing witness to itself by its own hand and its own blood. Not one testifies a regret or a weakness. The sigh of misfortune does not soften conviction. Almost all are solemn songs to constancy, defiance of death, and calls to immortality.

Amongst others, in large letters, written in blood by the hand of Vergniaud, one reads:

Potius mori quam fœdari!

The Girondins were removed during the night to their last prison at the Conciergerie. They placed them in a quarter distinct from the rest of the prison. The dungeons were adjoining. The impossibility of escaping from these walls, closed in by three-fold gratings, with iron bars, locks, and sentinels, had caused their treatment of privacy to be ameliorated from what it had hitherto been. They permitted them the use of ink and paper. They read the public journals; they communicated through the wicket with their wives, children, and friends.

Vergniaud's brother-in-law, M. Alluaud, came from Limoges to bring the prisoner a little money, for Vergniaud was in a complete state of destitution;

his very clothes had become mere rags. M. Alluaud brought with him his son, a child of 10 years, whose features recalled to the prisoner the image of his cherished sister. The child seeing his uncle shut up like a common felon, his face emaciated, his complexion wan, his hair all in disorder, his beard grown, his clothes dirty and worn and falling off him, began to cry, and in a state of fear, threw himself against his father's knees. "My child," said the prisoner, taking him in his arms, "do not be afraid, and look at me well; when you become a man you will say you saw Vergniaud, the founder of the Republic, in the grandest moment and in the most glorious costume of his life; that in which he suffered the persecution of a felon, and when he was preparing to die for men who were free."

The child did in fact remember it, and repeated it 50 years afterwards to him who writes these lines.

VERGNIAUD neither affected the cheerfulness, which was against the grain, of his young friends, Ducos and Fonfrède, nor the solemn bearing of Lasource, nor the impatient ardour to die of Valazé, nor the laborious preoccupation of Brissot, in order to justify his memory before posterity. He seemed as careless of the remembrance of it as he had been of his life. Calm, grave, natural, sometimes smiling, more frequently pensive, he never wrote, he spoke little; he seemed to waste, without haste as without regret, days

in forced idleness, which was not entirely unsuited to his character. As a pilot torn from the helm during a storm, he rested himself on the deck to the oscillations of the ship, the directing of which no longer concerned him. His powerful mind, and which his very strength at times rendered too firm, his prophetic but slothful genius, left him but little sensitiveness for himself. He summed up in a glance and in a word the entire position, and felt it no further in detail. Alone and mournful, on his bed or in the enclosure, he sometimes lightened the conversation by one of those bursts of eloquence which the dungeon does not frame less majestically than the tribune. His colleagues, touched, applauded him, and implored him to note down these extemporary compositions for the hour when he would face the tribunal, or for posterity. Vergniaud would not condescend to gather together these crumbs of talent. Eloquence with him was not an art, it was his very soul; he was certain of always having it with him, and to find it when necessary. He valued it as a weapon of defence, and not merely to be worn in the presence of time and before the future. His idea passed; he did not seek to preserve its useless echo. He fell again into sleep or indifference.

He conversed frequently with Fauchet, and without sharing his faith, he tasted of the theories and hopes of Christianity. He looked on that religion as the true philosophy of humanity, clothed in mysteries and myths, to render it accessible to the feebleness of the eternal infancy of mankind. He respected Christianity as the moulder of coin respects gold in adul-

terated money. He did not desire the destruction of religion, but its slow, free, and careful purification. "Render God free from his likeness," he said; "that is the last work of philosophy and of the Revolution."

Vergniaud esteemed Fauchet's talent a great deal more since that vague and declamatory talent had become vivified, and as it were sanctified, by the revival of religious feeling in the mind of the bishop of Calvados, and by the presentiment of martyrdom. When not engaged in these conversations, the attitude of Vergniaud was that of indifference: not that indifference of a careless man, who does not elevate himself to the dignity of his fate, and who profanes the three most sacred things in life, conscience, misfortune, and death; but that indifference of a serious-minded man, who judges his own position, and governs it, and gives distractions to his life up to the hour that he sacrifices it to a duty.

Such was Vergniaud in prison. He did not appear to be the most impassive of his companions in misfortune, because he was the most reflective and the greatest amongst them. Friendship held a sovereign ascendency over his mind. The eve of the day when the trial of those accused with himself commenced, he threw into the yard the poison that for five months he had carried about him, in order to die the same death as his friends, and to remain in companionship with them to the scaffold.

On the 22nd October they communicated to them

their act of accusation, and on the 26th the trial commenced.

At noon the accused were brought in. They numbered 22. They entered one by one between two rows of *gensd'armes* into the audience chamber. They silently took their places on the bench for the accused.

Vergniaud was the last to advance, and was the most noticed of all. All Paris knew him, and had seen him in his majestic position on the pedestal of the tribune. They were not alone curious to contemplate the orator on a level with his enemies, but the man who had descended to the criminal's stool. They expected efforts and bursts of eloquence from him, which would give to the drama of the trial a sudden turn of fortune and a relapse of opinions, worthy of the days of Demosthenes and Cicero. Vergniaud's *prestige* completely surrounded him. He was one of those men from whom everything was expected,—even to the impossible.

A murmur of interest and compassion arose at the sight of him. It was no longer the Vergniaud of the Convention, but the prisoner of the people. His muscles, softened by idleness and the discouragement of his heart, no longer vibrated to the somewhat heavy and rather effeminate working of the body. There was in his attitude a listlessness that in itself resembled weakness. His figure was heavy, his bearing weighty, his eye dejected or dim, his cheeks swollen or sunken, and his livid and pale complexion had contracted the sallow hue of prisons. His brow broke

out with moisture. The locks of his hair seemed to cling to his skin by this perpetual perspiration. He was dressed in the same blue coat, with long hanging tails and large collar turned back, in which he was always seen in the Convention; but this coat had become too narrow for his increased proportions, and had burst at his shoulder, causing it to be one-sided across his chest, and inconvenienced his movements like a borrowed garment. His whole appearance breathed the decay of great things. One felt a voluntary pity in looking at him; there was no shuddering. It was the wrestler thrown down, and lying on the ground. Though Vergniaud was the last to enter, yet his colleagues made place for him in the middle of the bench, as a chief around whom they gloried in grouping themselves.

INSTEAD of carrying their defence up to the elevation of their position and mind on the ground of general policy, and admitting the glorious crime of desiring to moderate the Republic so as to render it irreproachable and invincible, the Girondins limited themselves to shelter themselves individually against the attacks of their enemies. Their defence was degrading and their dignity lowered. Vergniaud himself seemed more to excuse himself for, than to pride himself on, his opinions. No one word broke forth from the hearts of these accused parties worthy of being recorded in history. The fear of risking a remnant of life sealed their lips. The anxiety to save their existence de-

stroyed the anxiety of avenging their memories. They only became great once more, when all hope was gone.

The jury closed the debates on the 30th October at eight o'clock at night. Every one of those accused were declared guilty of conspiring against the unity and inseparableness of the Republic, and condemned to death.

At the word Death, a cry of astonishment and horror rose from the bench where the accused sat. Vergniaud, placed on the most elevated seat, impassive, cast a look on the tribunal, his colleagues, and the crowd, which seemed to take in the whole scene, and seek in the past for an example and a likeness to such derision by fate and of such ingratitude in a people.

The deputy Bailleul, proscribed like the Girondins, but escaped from the proscription, and concealed in Paris, had promised them that on the day sentence was passed they should have a feast from without, which should either be triumphant or funereal, according to the verdict, in celebration of their liberty or in commemoration of their death. The funereal supper was prepared in the large dungeon. Choice dishes, rare wines, expensive flowers, and numerous lights decked the oak tables of the prisons. It was the luxury of a last adieu, the prodigality of dying men who need save nothing for the following day. The condemned sat at this last banquet, at first to restore their worn-out strength; and then they remained to await the day

with patience and distraction. It was not worth while to sleep.

The meal was prolonged to the first dawn. Vergniaud, placed at the centre of the table, presided over it with the same calm dignity which he had maintained on the night of the 10th August, when presiding over the Convention. Vergniaud amongst them all had the least to regret in life, for he had accomplished his glory, and he left neither father nor mother, nor wife nor children behind him.

For a long time nothing indicated in their faces or their conversation that the repast was the prelude to an execution. They ate and drank with appetite, but moderately. When the dishes were removed, and nothing remained on the table but flint bottles and flowers, the conversation became varied, animated, noisy, and serious, like the conversation of careless men, whose tongues and thoughts have been rendered free through the excitement occasioned by wine.

Towards morning it took a more serious and solemn turn. Brissot spoke prophetically of the misfortunes of the Republic, shorn of its most honest and eloquent citizens.

"What blood will it not require to wash out ours!" he cried at last. They all were silent for a moment, and seemed consternated before the phantom of the future evoked by Brissot. "My friends," continued Vergniaud, "in grafting the tree we have killed it; it is too old. Robespierre cuts it. Will he be more fortunate than we are? No. The soil is too light to nourish the roots of civic liberty, the people are too

childish to handle the laws without wounding themselves; they will come back to their kings as children return to their rattles! . . . We made a mistake in the time of our birth, and in dying for the liberty of the world," he went on; "we fancied ourselves in Rome, and we were in Paris! But revolutions are like critical moments, which in one night will turn a man's head white: they quickly mature nations. The blood in our veins is hot enough to render the soil of the Republic fruitful. Let us not take the future away with us, and let us leave hope to the people in exchange for the death they are giving to us!"

THERE was a long silence after Vergniaud's words, and the conversation passed with their thoughts from earth to heaven. The immortality of the soul, and the sublime conjectures on the future life they were so near, occupied the moments yet left for conversation. Their voices became lowered, their tone became solemn, smiles were effaced, the sound of their words became grave and hollow, like the noise of a hammer sounding a grave. Fonfrède, Gensonné, Carra, Fauchet, and Brissot either discoursed, or breathed all the divinity of human reason, and all the certitude of conscience, beneath the mysterious problems of an immaterial destiny of the human mind.

Vergniaud, who up to this had been silent, when called on by his friends resumed the subject. Never had his brow, his gesture, his word, or the unearthly tone of his voice, stirred so deeply the hearts of his

listeners. He seemed to speak from the height of God's tribune.

After having bound in one single and invincible group all moral proofs of the existence of a first being, which according to his time he called, the Supreme Being; after having shown the necessity for a providence, the result of the excellence of that Supreme Being over creations emanating from himself, and the necessity for justice, the divine debt of the Creator towards his works; after having cited from Socrates to Cicero, and from Cicero to all the just that have been sacrificed, the universal belief of people and sages—a proof above all other proofs, as it is an instinct in nature of a second life as irrefutable as the instinct of a present life; after having forced up to evidence and enthusiasm the certitude of the continuation of being after this mortal being, not destroyed, but metamorphosed by death: "But," he said, in more eloquent language, and working himself up to the poesy of a political prophet, and bringing back the subject to the position of those accused with him, to take his last proof from themselves, the best demonstration of immortality, "is it not we? we who are here? we who are calm, serene, impassive by the side of our friend's corpse, in the presence of our own dead bodies, discussing, like a peaceable assembly of philosophers, on the light or on the darkness which will follow immediately on our last breath, and dying happier than Danton, who will live, and than Robespierre, who will triumph?

"Or otherwise, why this calmness in our discourse,

and this serenity in our minds? Is it not the feeling within us of having accomplished a great duty towards mankind? Well! what, then, is one's native land? what, then, is mankind? Is it a heap of living dust, which is a man to-day, which will be clay and blood to-morrow? No, it is not for that living mire, it is for the soul of our country and of mankind that we die? But what are we, then, ourselves, if not a portion of that accumulated soul of the human race. Every man of which our species is composed has also an immortal spirit, imperishable, and confounded with that soul of one's country and of the human race, for which it is so grand and so sweet to devote oneself to suffer and to die! There is the reason we are not sublime dupes," he continued, "but beings naturally following their moral instinct, and who, after that duty is fulfilled, live again, suffering or enjoying in immortality the destinies of humanity. Let us die, then, not with confidence, but with conviction. Our witness in this great trial with death is our conscience! our judge, that great Being which creatures have sought to give a name to, and to whose designs we serve, like tools he breaks in his work, but the ruins of which fall at his feet. Death is the most powerful act of our life, for it gives birth to a superior existence. If it were not so," he added, with more thought, "there would be something greater than God. It would be man, just as we are, sacrificing himself for his country without reward and without a future! Such a supposition is a folly or blasphemy. I cast it from me with contempt and horror. . . . No, Vergniaud is not greater than God,

but God is more just than Vergniaud, and will not raise him up to the scaffold to-morrow but to justify and avenge him in the future!"

At ten o'clock the executioners entered to prepare the heads of the condemned for the knife, and to bind their hands. Every one of them came of their own accord, and bent their heads beneath the scissors, and held out their arms for the ropes.

Vergniaud took out his watch, and wrote with the point of a pin several initials, and the date of the 30th October, in the interior of the gold lid; he slipped the watch into the hand of one of the assistants, to be given to a young girl that he loved with a brother's love, and that he intended, it was said, to have married later.

When all their hair had fallen on the stone flags of the dungeon, the executioners and the *gensd'armes* gathered the condemned men together, and made them walk in a line towards the court of the palace. Five carts awaited their burden. An immense crowd surrounded them. At the first steps beyond the Conciergerie the Girondins intoned, with one voice and as a funeral march, the first stanza of the *Marseillaise*, and dwelling with significant force on those lines with two meanings:

Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé.

From that moment they ceased to think of them-

selves, in order to bear in mind only the example of a republican death they wished to leave to the people. Their voices fell but momentarily at the end of each stanza, to be raised with more energy and more powerfully at the beginning of the following verse.

Arrived at the foot of the scaffold, they embraced each other in token of their communion in liberty, in life, and in death. Then they again took up the funereal song, mutually to encourage each other before execution, and to let, up to the last moment of him who was being executed, the voices of his companions in death fall on his ear. Every one of them died without any show of weakness.

At each fall of the axe the voices were diminished. The ranks began to clear at the foot of the guillotine. One single voice continued the *Marseillaise:* it was Vergniaud, the last to be executed. Those supreme notes were his last words. Like his companions, he did not die, he passed away in enthusiasm, and his life, began by immortal speeches, ended with a hymn to the eternity of the Revolution.

THE END.

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